EVOLUTION OF HINDU MARRIAGE

© NILAKSHI SENGUPTA

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TO
MY PARENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my deep gratitude to Prof. A. L. Basham for his valuable guidance and supervision which made this work possible. I am also indebted to Prof. Nihar Ranjan Ray for initiating me into the work, and to Mr. C. A. Rylands, School of Oriental and African Studies for helping me with the Sanskrit texts.

FOREWORD

There can be few marriage rituals in the whole world as beautiful, solemn, and complex as that of Hinduism. Rich in symbolism, it contains elements which can be traced back to prehistoric times. It is clear from the Ṛgveda that in the earliest days of Aryan settlement in India the marriage ritual was essentially the same as that of later ages, though it grew more elaborate with the passing centuries, as new non-Indo-European elements were introduced into Aryan culture and as civilization developed. Simultaneously the relationship of marriage somewhat changed and modified itself. The jurists, acknowledging and giving sanction to existing practices, elaborated the doctrine of the eight forms of marriage, which must at one time have corresponded to the realities of the existing social situation, but which, after the Gupta period if not before, became virtually obsolete.

Dr. Sengupta's thorough study of the early history of Hindu marriage is a most valuable contribution to our knowledge of Indian social history. Carefully analysing the evidence available in the various strata of Hindu sacred and secular literature, she has presented a comprehensive and convincing picture of the evolution of Hindu marriage down to classical times. She has done much to interpret the symbolism of the ceremonial, and has adduced many parallels from the marriage rituals of other cultures. Especially noteworthy is her reconstruction of the ritual of the earliest Aryans in India, from the very confused evidence of the Ṛgveda.

Her work is of more than academic interest at a time when the social order of India is undergoing considerable strain, as a result of external influences and a rapidly changing economic system. It is clear enough from the pages of this book that the Hindu attitude to marriage has changed somewhat in the course of centuries. It was not

ABBREVIATIONS

Ait. Br.	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.
Āp. Gr.	Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra.
Āp. Dh.	Āpastamba Dharmasūtra.
A.B.O.R.I.	Annals of Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.
Āśv. Gr.	Āśvalāyaṇa Gṛhyasūtra.
A.V.	Atharva-Veda.
A.I.O.C.	All India Oriental Conference (Proceedings).
Āśv. Gr. Par.	Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Pariśiṣṭa.
Anu	Anuśāsana Parva (Mahābhārata).
Bhār. Gr.	Bhāradvāja Gṛhyasūtra.
Baudh. Gr.	Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra.
Baudh. Dh.	Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra.
D.K.A.W.	Denkschriften Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften.
D.N.	Dīgha Nikāya.
D.F.B.	Die Frau im Brahmanismus.
E.R.E.	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.
Gaut. Dh.	Gautama Dharmasūtra.
Gobh. Gr.	Gobhila Gṛhyasūtra.
G.O.S.	Gaekwad Oriental Series.
H.S.	Hindu Saṃskāras.
H.H.M.	History of Human Marriage.
H.O.S.	Harvard Oriental Series.
H.L.C.	Hindu Law and Customs.
Hir. Gr.	Hiraṇyakeśin Gṛhyasūtra.
H.D.S.	History of Dharmaśāstra.
I.C.	Indian Culture.
I.H.Q.	Indian Historical Quarterly.
I.A.	Indian Antiquary.
Ind. Stud.	Indische Studien.
J.	Jātakas.
J.A.O.S.	Journal of American Oriental Society.
J.B.A.S.	Journal of Bengal Asiatic Society.
J.B.O.R.S.	Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society.

Kum.	Kumārasambhavam (Kālidāsa).
Kaut.	Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra.
Kām.	Kāmasūtra (Vātsyāyana).
Kauś.	Kauśika Sūtra.
Mait. Sam.	Maitrāyanī Saṃhitā.
Māl.	Mālavākāgnimitram (Kālidāsa).
M.G.I.P.	Medizin in Grundress der Indo arischen Philologie.
Medh.	Medhātithi.
M.E.	Miscellaneous Essays.
M.	Mantrapāṭha.
Mahā.	Mahābhārata.
Mān. Gr.	Mānava Gṛhyasūtra.
Pār. Gr.	Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra.
P.W.H.C.	Position of Women in Hindu Civilization.
P.T.S.	Pali Text Society.
R.V.	Ṛg-Veda.
R.B.M.	Ritual and Belief in Morocco.
Raghu.	Raghuvaṃsam (Kālidasa).
Śat. Br.	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.
Śaṅkh. Gr.	Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra.
S.E.W.	Symbolism of East and West.
Śaku.	Śakuntalā (Kālidāsa).
S.L.A.	Sexual Life in Ancient India.
S.A.E.S.	Some Aspects of Earliest Social History of India.
S.B.E.	Sacred Books of the East.
Vas. Dh.	Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra.
V.P.	Vinaya Piṭaka.
Yājñ.	Yājñavalkya Smṛti.

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INTRODUCTION

IN THE pages that follow we have made an attempt to trace the roots and evolution of Hindu marriage from the earliest times of which we have any record, down to 500 A.D. We have tried to present a systematic picture of the development of the institution of marriage and its rituals and the position of women affected by it.

The study of these rituals is interesting inasmuch as it reveals the fusion of the culture of the Indo-Aryans with that of the indigenous tribes and other inhabitants of India, as also in that it seems as a pointer to the evolution of the status of women, in the home and society and the socio-cultural outlook on marital life throughout the ages.

The Aryans, when they migrated to India, had already a definite ideology regarding the institution of marriage, as well as a set of rules and regulations with the corresponding rituals. Simple as these rituals were, those are enough to throw light on the status of women in the home and society, as also on what was believed about the nature of the union of man and woman.

In later days, with the expansion of the Aryans in all directions over the country, much as they tried to keep the purity of their stock intact, there was fusion of races and consequently of cultures, customs and rituals. Some of the indigenous races of India had a fairly developed civilization and culture, and also their own social customs and institutions. With their expansion the Aryans absorbed the customs of the pre-Aryans and non-Aryans, as is evident from a study of the gradual transformation of the simple Vedic rituals to the highly complicated forms of the later *Sūtras*.

The study is mainly based on literary sources, the exact dating of which is a very difficult problem, as there are so many differences of opinion. We have generally accepted the dating of Dr. P. V. Kane[1] as this seems to be the most recent and correct. Although the texts belong to different periods down to the Guptas, the commentators are all of the medieval period, and are often influenced by the ideas of their own times. Our personal knowledge of the local customs and practices prevalent in India, has been referred to for light on the rites of the early period.

Among the earliest religious texts *Ṛg-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda* are most useful for our purpose. The period of Vedic *Saṃhitās* may go back to the period between 1500 and 1000 B.C.[2] But the parts used by us mostly belong to the end of that period. The *Brāhmaṇas*, belonging to different Vedas have also been used, and throw some light on the subject. The *Gṛhyasūtras* or domestic rituals are very useful as they contain the ceremonies of marriage in detail. They belong to the period of 800 to 400 B.C. But some of the *Gṛhyasūtras* are later, and belong to the *Dharmasūtra* period i.e., 600-300 B.C. There are a number of *mantras* quoted in the *Sūtras*, which do not occur in the *Saṃhitās* and are quite separate from the *Sūtra* texts. These are the *Mantra Brāhmaṇa* quoted by Gobhila and *Mantrapāṭha* quoted by Āpastamba. The *Dharmasūtras* are the oldest law books of the Indians and are the books of instruction on spiritual and secular law. The *Artha-śāstra* of Kauṭilya, the most important early Indian manual of statecraft and secular law, belongs to 300 to 100 B.C. At a somewhat later date appeared the versified compendia of law and customs known as *Dharmaśāstras* or *Smṛtis*, of which the oldest is *Manu Smṛti*, compiled between 200 B.C. and A.D. 200. *Yājñavalkya, Viṣṇu, Nārada* and *Bṛhaspati Smṛtis* relate to the period between A.D. 100 and 500. These *Śāstric* texts extend up to the Gupta period. The Buddhist, Jaina and Hindu literature, inscriptions and the accounts of the foreign travellers of the times have also been consulted. The great epics *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmā-*

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[1] Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II,part 1, Chronological Table.

[2] Here, and throughout this work we have adopted the chronology of Dr. P. V. Kane.

yaṇa, which were composed between the 4th century B.C. and the 4th century A.D. also represent contemporary social life and have been utilized.

In the 19th century the study of the Indian social order, as far as our scholars were concerned, was mainly inspired by the spirit of nationalism. They realized the ill effects of many current social practices, and tried to reform society with the sanction of the sacred texts. The works of Rājā Rāmmohan Ray[3] against Satī, Iśvarchandra Vidyāsāgar's writings[4] on widow-marriage and Swami Dayānand Saraswati's all belong *'Satyārtha Prakāśa'* that group. They were mainly written from a nationalist angle and are by no means free from prejudice.

Some other recent works also represent more or less the same spirit. Dr. A. S. Altekar in *Position of Women in Hindu Civilization* gives some suggestions for the future to bring about a harmony between the past and the present. Valavalkar in *Hindu Social Institutions* declares that there are some intrinsic virtues of the old Hindu theory and conception of human life and organisation worth recommending for adoption by the whole world.

S. C. Sarkar, on the other hand, in *Some Aspects of the Earliest Social History of India* has a new approach. He emphasizes aspects of marriage and society, such as promiscuity, matriarchy etc. which were scarcely recognized as existing by earlier scholars. But he gives too much historical value to the myths, and bases his conclusions on unconvincing material. It would seem that Sarkar's work is prejudiced by strong opposition to the rigidity of conventional Hindu family life, and hence he has unduly stressed every hint at laxity in the *Ṛg-Veda.*

There are some other very valuable works on the subject, such as Kane's *History of Dharmaśāstra,* and Jolly's *Hindu Law and Customs.* These works, though giving the dates of the sources, have not made much distinction between the early Vedic and the later Vedic periods, which show quite remarkable differences in social changes and the position of women. Moreover they devote little attention to the marriage rituals which are so significant. Westermarck in *History of Human Marriage* has made a comparative study of such rituals throughout the world. But his work has but few references to Hindu rituals.

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[3] *English Works of Raja Rammohan Ray.*

[4] Iśvarachandra Vidyasagar: *Marriage of Widows.*

The first detailed study of the marriage rituals was made by Winternitz in his commentaries on the *Āpastambiya Gṛhyasūtra,* where he makes many comparisons with the rituals of other Indo-European peoples. Prof. Pandey's *Hindu Saṃskāra* deals with the *Gṛhyasūtra* rituals, but his work is almost entirely descriptive.

The present work is undertaken not only in an effort to trace the development of these rituals and forms from their Vedic roots down to the *Smṛti* and to attempt to discover the traces of pre-Aryan and non-Aryan customs and usages, but also to establish as far as possible the significance of every ritual. The rituals have been described chronologically and also in sections, as religious, magical and symbolical. We have tried to indicate the meaning of the rituals by adopting the methods suggested by Radcliffe Brown in *Structure & Function of Primitive Society,* by comparing the various uses of the symbol and trying to discover the common element.

In the *Dharmasūtra* period we find reference to eight forms of marriage. It is generally accepted that *Rākṣasa* was the original form of marriage and *Brāhma* was the product of the most civilized condition of society. The Aryans might have gone through all these stages before finally accepting *Brāhma* form, but *Brāhma* was surely the only legal form of marriage among all the branches of Aryans before they entered India. The other inferior forms of marriage were assimilated late into Aryan society. These were taken from the people with whom they came into contact. This is proved by the fact that these lower forms of marriage were more willingly accepted by the later law books than the earlier ones. We have also tried to trace the origin of these forms and to establish the trend of their development from the contradictory statements of the *Manusaṃhitā,* which is probably the compilation of the texts of different times.

We have tried to present a systematic account of the various developments connected with marriage and of their effect on the status of women in the home and society, on the socio-cultural attitude to women, and on Indian marital life through the ages.

Calcutta. NILAKSHI SEN GUPTA

CHAPTER I

MARRIAGE RITUALS IN THE *RG-VEDA* AND *ATHARVA-VEDA*

The earliest references to the institution of marriage in India are in the *Ṛg-Veda.* The hymns show that the *Ṛg-Vedic* marriage was considered a sacrament and that the whole basis of marriage was the spiritual unification of the couple by magic *mantras.* Not only was marriage well established in the Vedic ages, but it was also regarded as a social and religious duty and necessity. A detailed description of the marriage ceremony of the Sun-maiden Sūryā and Soma, the moon is found in *ṚV*.X.85. It consists of groups of verses relating to marriage ceremonials, loosely strung together, and most of them are quoted in the manuals of domestic rituals or *Gṛhyasūtras.* The hymn consists partly of narrative stanzas, partly of addresses to the Aśvins and Sūryā, and partly of *mantras* of benediction and incantation recited at the various stages of the marriage ceremony. The order of verses in the *Ṛg-Veda and Atharva-Veda* does not exactly reflect the order of events at the marriage ceremony, but with a little change in the order, we find in these verses a consistent picture of the whole marriage ritual.

In the hymn, negotiations of marriage are made by the two Aśvins, who appear to be the groomsmen, and who ask for the hand of Sūryā from her father on behalf of Soma.

सोमो वधूयुरभदवश्विनास्तामुभा वरा ।
सूर्यां यत्पत्ये शंसन्तीं मनसा सविताददात् ।। (ऋ.१०.८५.९)

"Soma was desirous of a bride and the two Aśvins were the groomsmen. Then Savitā gave his willing Sūryā, who was approving it in her mind, to her husband."

Though *vara* generally means the husband or suitor, it is evidently used here as a wooer, who asks for the bride on behalf of someone else.

When the two Aśvins start for the wooing of Sūryā the bridegroom utters the following *mantra* invoking the gods to make the journey successful:

अनृक्षरा ऋजवः सन्तु पन्था
येभिः सखायो यंति नो वरेयं ।

समर्यमा सं भगो नो निनीयात्
सं जास्पत्यं सुयममस्तु देवाः ।। (ऋ.१०.८५.२३)

"Thornless and smooth be the paths by which our friends travel for the wooing. May the gods Aryamā and Bhaga lead us; O Gods, may the union of husband and wife be successful", and on their arrival at the bride's home all the gods give them assent.

यदश्विना पृच्छमानावयातं
त्रिचक्रेण वहतुं सूर्यायाः ।

विश्वे देवा अनु तद्वामजानन्
पुत्रः पितराववृणीत पूषा ।। (ऋ.१०.८५.१४)

"When on your three-wheeled chariot, O Aśvins you came as wooers to Sūryā's wedding, then all the gods agreed to your proposal, Pūṣan as son elected you as father". Pūṣan is a protector and multiplier of cattle (*paśupā*) and of human possessions in general.[1] In character he is a solar deity and beholds the universe and is a guide on roads and journeys.[2]

He is connected with the marriage ceremonials,[3] being besought to take the bride's hand and lead her away and bless her in her conjugal relations. So it seems that at the time of marriage the girl is partially given in charge of Pūṣan, who in his turn elects the Aśvins to arrange the marriage.

Griffith thinks that Pūṣan here means Savitṛ and interprets the last phrase as intended to express Savitṛ's close relationship and obligation to the Aśvins, who had arranged the marriage.[4] This verse also shows that at the time of negotiation of marriage the approval of the relatives or friends is necessary.

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[1] Puṣtimbha — *Ṛ. V.* VI. 3-7.
[2] *R.V.*I.42.1; X.17.16; X.85.26.
[3] *R.V.*X.85.26 & 37.

Selecting the Auspicious Day

An auspicious day is always selected for every ceremony connected with marriage. Cows are slain in the *Maghā nakṣatra* and the bride is borne to her husband's home in the *nakṣatra Phālgunī.*

सूर्यायावहतुः प्रागात्
सविता यमवासृजत् ।
अघासु हन्यन्ते गावो-
ऽर्जुन्योः पर्युह्यते ।। (ऋ.१०.८५·१३)

"The bridal procession of Sūryā, which is started by Savitā, has gone beforehand. The cows are slain in the *Aghā* (*Maghā*) and Sūryā is brought to her husband's home on *Ārjuni* (*Phālguni*)".
Sūryā's bridal procession here presumably means that the bearers of the bridal presents to Sūryā, given by her father had already advanced. Even at present, the presents given to the bride by her father are carried in procession to the groom's house before the bride's departure from her father's home. *Hanyante* in this verse is translated by Sāyana as *daṇḍais tāḍyante preraṇārtham.* But *hanyante* generally means slay and no doubt Sāyana's forced interpretation was largely inspired by the general horror of cow-killing in later Hinduism. Moreover, in the Vedas we find many references to the slaying of cows on festive occasions,[5] so that it can be assumed that cows were slain on the occasion of marriage. If we cannot accept this interpretation we must assume that this verse is misplaced, and should appear towards the end of the hymn, referring

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[4] Griffith on *Ṛg-Veda.* X.85.14 (note).

[5] *Āp.* Gṛ. II.4.8.5-7; *Āśv.* Gṛ. I.24, 31-33; Weber, Ind. Stud. X.125. A guest is called *goghna* or cow-killer, because formerly a cow was to be killed on the arrival of a distinguished guest.

to the procession of the bride to her new home after the ceremony.

THE WEDDING

Pāṇigrahaṇa

Now comes the actual marriage ceremony. The marriage commences with the bridegroom taking the hand of the bride with the following *mantra* :

गृभ्णामि ते सौभगत्वाय हस्तं
मया पत्या जरदष्टिर्यथासः ।
भगो अर्यमा सविता पुरंधि-
र्मह्यं त्वादुर्गार्हपत्याय देवाः ।। (ऋ.१३.८५.३६)

"I take your hand in mine for happy fortune, that you may reach old age with me, your husband. The gods Aryaman, Bhaga, Savitā, Purandhi have given you to me so that I may become a householder."[6]

The rite of *Pāṇigrahaṇa* symbolises a solemn contract and the gods are invoked to witness and strengthen it. This rite is found also in other spheres of life; for instance the *guru* takes the student's hand at the time of initiation, as a symbol of a solemn promise, and utters the following *mantra* :

भगस्ते हस्तमग्रभीत्, सविता हस्तमग्रभीत् पूषा ते हस्तमग्रभीदर्यमा
हस्तमग्रभीत्मित्रस्त्वमसि धर्मणाग्निराचार्य्यस्तव असावहम् चोभावग्न
एतं ते ब्रह्मचारिणं परिददामीन्द्रैतत्ते ब्रह्मचारिणं परिददामि, आदित्यैतं
ते ब्रह्मचारिणं परिददामि विश्वेदेवा एतं वो ब्रह्मचारिणं परिददामि,
दीर्घायुत्वाय सुप्रजास्त्वाय सुवीर्याय रायस्पोषाय सर्वेषां
वेदानामाधिपत्याय सुश्लोक्याय स्वस्तये (*Śāṅkh. Gṛ*. II.3.1)

"Bhaga has seized your hand, Savitar has seized your hand Pūṣan has seized your hand, Aryaman has seized your hand, Mitra are you by right. Agni is your teacher and I, both of us. O Agni, I give this student in your charge, O Indra, I give this student in your charge. O Sun, I give this student in your charge, O Viśvedeva, I give this student in your charge, for the sake of long life, of blessed offspring and strength, of increase of wealth, of mastery of all Vedas, of renown, of bliss."

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[6] For governing the household — Geldner.

Walking round the Fire

It is not explicitly stated in the *Ṛg-Veda* that the actual marriage ceremony is performed in front of the Sacred Fire, nor do we find any references to the bride's walking round it. That part of the ceremony, which is described in the *Gṛhyasūtras,* is not mentioned here. But the following verses prove the presence of a Sacred Fire at the marriage ceremony:

तुभ्यमग्रे पर्यवह न्त्सूर्यां वहतुना सह ।
पुनः पतिभ्यो जायां दा अग्ने प्रजया सह ।। (ऋ.१०.८५·३८)

"For you,[7] in the beginning, (they) carried Sūryā together with the bridal train. O Agni, give (us) husbands our wife back again, with offspring."

पुनः पत्नीमग्निरदादायुषा सह वर्चसा ।
दीर्घायुरस्या यः पतिर्जीवाति शरदं शतं ।। (ऋ.१०.८५·३९)

"Agni gave back the wife again with long life and splendour. May he who is her husband be long lived and live a hundred autumns."

This reference to the husband in the plural number is strange and it has been suggested that it gives evidence of polyandry.[8] We believe however that such a non-Aryan custom could hardly be implied, and suggest that the plural is honorific; the strange word *dārā* meaning wife, which is grammatically masculine plural, is significant in this connection.

There are two other verses which are also significant:

सोमः प्रथमो विविदे गन्धर्वो विविद उत्तरः ।
तृतीयो अग्निष्टे पतिस्तुरीयस्ते मनुष्यजाः ।। (ऋ.१०.८५·४०)
सोमो ददद्गन्धर्वाय गन्धर्वो ददग्नये ।
रयिं च पुत्रांश्चादादग्निर्मह्यमथो इमां ।। (ऋ.१०.८५·४१)

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[7] You-Agni, representing the Sacred Fire in the house of the bride's father, round which she is now led by the bridegroom. –Griffith.

[8] Sarkar, *S.A.E.S.* p. 80.

"Soma obtained her first, the Gandharva obtained her next; Agni was your third husband, and your fourth husband is human born."
"Soma gave her to the Gandharva, the Gandharva gave her to Agni. Agni has given her to me, and wealth and sons." The references to Soma as the first husband quoted in the above verses show quite clearly that these are interpolations, and have no original connection with the main body of the hymn, in which Soma is himself the bridegroom. The verses evidently refer to human marriage. Dr. Sarkar[9] tries to interpret the last verse as a relic of a gradually disused custom of polyandry, which was transformed into an allegory. But this interpretation does not seem to be correct. These verses simply mean that the girl before her marriage belonged to the supernatural beings, from whom the human husband receives her. The references to the bridegroom's receiving the bride from Agni seems to imply circumambulation of and oblation to the Sacred Fire. This ceremony, along with the *Paṇigrahaṇa*, constitutes the actual marriage according to the *Gṛhyasūtras*.

The idea behind this ritual seems to be that the girl is considered to be possessed by the gods before her marriage, and that the father has no right to make a gift of her. The husband gets her as a gift of the gods.

This is confirmed by the fact that there is no mention of the rite of *Sampradāna* or bestowal in either the *Ṛg-Veda* or *Atharva-Veda*. On the other hand *Sampradāna* is a rite which today constitutes an important feature of Hindu marriage custom.

Releasing the Bride from the Father's House

There are *mantras* by which the bride is made free from the fetters of Varuṇa, with which the bride's father Savitṛ has bound her.

प्र त्वा मुञ्चामि वरुणस्य पाशाद्-
येनत्वावघ्नात्सविता सुशेवः ।

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[9] **Sarkar, —** *S.A.E.S.*, p. 80.

ऋतस्य योनौ सुकृतस्य लोके-
ऽरिष्टां त्वा सह पत्या दधामि ॥ (ऋ· १०.८५·२४)

"I free you from the fetters of Varuṇa by which generous Savitṛ has bound you. In the cradle of law,[10] in the world of the good deeds, I unite you, uninjured with your husband." The same *mantra* is used in *Gṛhyasūtras*. The *Āśvalāyana ,Gṛhyasūtra*[11] lays down that the verse should be pronounced when the bridegroom loosens the two knots (*śikhā*) of the bride's hair, if she wears her hair thus, and two tufts of wool were bound round her hair on the two sides with these *mantras*. This is of course symbolic of cutting the bond of Varuṇa which holds the maiden bound to her father's house.

In the *Ṛg-Veda* Varuṇa's fetters generally appear in the context of the punishment of wrong-doers, and as Varuṇa is considered to be the presiding deity of *Ṛta* or right, here he seems to have been conceived as tying the maid to her father's house, as the girl during maidenhood had to be confined there. It would follow then that before she could be carried out of the house Varuṇa's bond must be unloosened by some symbolic ritual.

By the next *mantra* the bride is released from her father's home, but bound to that of her husband's.

प्रेतो मुञ्चामि नामुतः सुबद्धाममुतस्करं ।
यथेयमिन्द्र मीढ्वः सुपुत्रा सुभगासति ॥ (ऋ. १०.८५·२५)

"I release you from here but not from there. I place you here firmly ; O generous Indra, so that she may have excellent sons and be blessed with fortune."

There are three other verses in which Viśvāvasu is asked to leave the bride.

उदीर्ष्वातः पतिवती ह्येषा
विश्वावसुं नमसा गीर्भिरीळे ।
अन्यामिच्छ पितृषदं व्यक्तां
स ते भागो जनुषा तस्य विद्धि ॥ (ऋ. १०.८५·२१)

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[10] In the place of sacrifice-Sāyana.

[11] *Āśv. Gṛ.* I.7.16.

"Rise up from here, this girl has a husband, I worship you Viśvāvasu with reverence, look for another marriageable girl who is still dwelling in her father's house. This is your share from the birth. Be aware of it."

उदीर्ष्वातो विश्वावसो
नमसेळामहे त्वा ।
अन्यामिच्छ प्रफर्व्यँ
सं जायां पत्या सृज ।। (ऋ.१०.८५·२२)

"Rise up from here Viśvāvasu, we worship you with reverence. Look for another maiden, with excellent hips,[12] and leave her with husband."

In the *Atharva-Veda* the same Viśvāvasu is referred to

उत्तिष्ठेतो विश्वावसो नमसेळामहे त्वा
जामिमिच्छ पितृसदं न्यक्तं स ते भागो जनुषा तस्य विद्धि । (अ.१४.२·३३)

"Rise and go from here, Viśvāvasu, I worship you with reverence. Look for her sister, who is dwelling with her father. This is your share from the birth. Be aware of it."

Dr. Sarkar[13] tries to interpret this verse as an evidence of brother and sister marriage. According to him in this *mantra* the union with an adorned *Jāmi* (sister) sitting among the fathers, is regarded as Viśvāvasu's birthright, so he thinks that the context would suggest that the marriage being celebrated was also one between a *Jāmi* and her brother.

This interpretation seems to be far fetched. Viśvāvasu is the name of one of the Gandharvas. As the girl before her marriage is supposed to belong to the Gandharva[14] it is quite probable that here he was told to leave her, who no longer required his care, and to transfer his guardianship to other maidens who were still in their father's house, waiting to be married in their turn.

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[12] Strong or robust — Geldner.
[13] Sarkar, *S.A.E.S.* p. 74-75.
[14] *R.V.*X.85.40.

Carrying off the Bride

Then the bride is carried to her new home, in a chariot made of *śalmali* wood, which is decorated with *kiṃśuka* flowers.

सुकिंशुकं शल्मलिं विश्वरूपं हिरण्यवर्णं सुवृत सुचक्रम् ।
आ रोह सूर्ये अमृतस्य लोकं स्योनं पत्ये वहतुं कृणुष्व ।। (ऋ.१०.८५·२०)

"Mount this (chariot) adorned with *kiṃśuka* (flowers)[15] (and made of) *śalmali* (wood), well shaped, of golden colour, turning easily and well-wheeled. O Sūryā, mount the world of immortality, make the journey happy for your husband."

Śalmali is a kind of silk-cotton tree and *kiṃśuka* is a tree well adorned with flowers. The flower being of blood red colour, may have some significance, since in later times the red colour became increasingly associated with marriage rituals and sexual life.

Prayer for Safe Journey of the Bridal Pair

When the bridal pair start their journey to the new home prayers are uttered for a safe journey free from robbers and accidents on the way.

मा विदन्परिपन्थिनो य आसीदन्ति दंपती ।
सुगेभिर्दुर्गमतीतामप द्रान्त्वरातयः ।। (ऋ.१०.८५·३२)

"Let not the robbers, who lie in ambush find the husband and wife and reach them, let them easily pass by dangers and may the enemies depart."

सुमंगलीरियं वधूरिमां समेत पश्यत ।
सौभाग्यमस्यै दत्त्वायाऽथास्तं वि परेतन ।। (ऋ.१०.८५·३३)

"This bride has signs of good fortune. So all of you come and look at her. Having given her good wishes, return to your homes."

The last verse is also mentioned in the *Atharva-Veda*[16] and according to *Kauśika Sūtra*[17] it is addressed to women who come to look at the bride on her journey.

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[15] Geldner. Sāyana believes that *kiṃśuka* wood is meant. The prefix *su* before *kiṃśuka* suggests that an adornment of the chariot is referred to.

[16] *A.V.*XIV.2.28.

At the New Home

Then the bride is welcomed at her new home, to reign supreme over the whole household and all the members of the family.

सम्राज्ञी श्वशुरे भव सम्राज्ञी श्वश्र्वां भव ।
ननान्दरि सम्राज्ञी भव, सम्राज्ञी अधि देवृषु ।। (ऋ.१०.८५.४६)

"Be queen over your father-in-law, be queen over your mother-in-law. Be queen over your sister-in-law and queen over your husband's brothers."

Prayers are then made to all the gods for the union of the hearts of the bride and the groom.

समञ्जन्तु विश्वे देवा:, समापो हृदयानि नौ ।
सं मातरिश्वा सं धाता समु द्वेष्ट्री दधातु नौ ।। (ऋ.१०.८५.४७)

"May all the gods unite our hearts, may the waters unite them. May Mātariśvan, Dhātṛ[18] and Deṣṭri[19] unite us together."

Invocation to the Gods for Progeny, Wealth and Happiness

Prayers are made to the gods Prajāpati and Indra for the happiness, wealth and progeny of the newly wed couple.

आ नः प्रजां जनयतु प्रजापतिराजरसाय समनक्त्वर्यमा ।
अदुर्मंगलीः पतिलोकमा विश, शं नो भव द्विपदे शं चतुष्पदे ।। (ऋ.१०.८५.४३)

"Let Prajāpati bring children to us. Aryamā unite us until old age. Enter your husband's home, free from bad omens. Be auspicious towards our bipeds and quadrupeds."

इमां त्वमिन्द्र मीढ्वः सुपुत्रां सुभगां कृणु ।
दशास्यां पुत्राना धेहि पतिमेकादशं कृधि ।। (ऋ.१०.८५.४५)

O, bounteous Indra, make this wife mother of good sons and fortunate. Give her ten sons, make her husband the eleventh."

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[17] *Kauś.* –77.10.

[18] Creator — Geldner.

[19] Guide — Geldner.

Consummation

Last of all comes the consummation of the marriage. The effect of witchcraft in the bride's body and garment are removed.

नीललोहितं भवति कृत्यासक्तिर्व्यज्यते ।
एवन्ते अस्या ज्ञातयः पतिर्बन्धेषु बध्यते ।। (ऋ.१०.८५.२८)

"It is blue and red. The clinging of Kṛtyā is driven off. Her kinsmen thrive, her husband is tied in bonds." This verse is very obscure. *Nīlalohitam* is interpreted by Griffith and Wilson and also by Sāyana as the form of Kṛtyā. But this cannot be an epithet of Kṛtyā, as Kṛtyā is feminine, while *nīlalohitam* is neuter. Weber[20] translated *nīlalohitam* as dark red and thought that it referred to the stained bridal dress and that Kṛtyā is a female evil spirit which is attached to the garment and liable to do harm. So the bride is asked to put off the garment. The verse thus seems to refer to the deflowering of the bride. This interpretation seems to be borne out by the following verses, which clearly refer to the widespread primitive belief in the danger of sexual intercourse with a virgin :

परा देहि शामुल्यं ब्रह्मभ्यो वि भजा वसु ।
कृत्यैषा पद्वती भूत्व्या जाया विशते पतिम् ।। (ऋ.१०.८५.२९)

"Put away the stained garment.[21] Give wealth to the Brahmaṇas. This Kṛtyā, having become possessed of feet, approaches the husband as his wife."

अश्ररातनूर्भवति रुशती पापयामुया ।
पतिर्यद्वध्वो वाससा स्वमङ्गमभिधित्सते ।। (ऋ.१०.८५.३०)

"His body becomes unlovely, shining with that wicked (Kṛtyā) when the husband wishes to put on his own limbs the garment of his wife."

This verse evidently refers in a veiled way to the sexual act. It is clear from these verses that according to the Vedic belief evil spirits always accompany the bridal pair and tries to do some harm at the time of intercourse. So the stained dress of the bride is put off and given to the priest for purification.

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[20] Weber, *Ind. Stud.* Vol. V, p. 187.

[21] *Śāmulyam* according to Sāyana is an impure garment soiled by the body.

> तृष्टमेतत्कटुकमेतदपाष्ठवद्विषवन्नैतदत्तवे ।
> सूर्यां यो ब्रह्मा विद्यात्स इद्वाधूयमर्हति ।। (ऋ १०. ८५. ३४)

"This (garment) is inflaming, it is bitter and biting, it is like poison, it is not fit to eat (fit for use), the Brāhmaṇa who knows Sūryā deserves the garment."[22]

> आशसनं विशसनमथो अविविकर्तनम् ।
> सूर्यायाः पश्य रूपाणि तानि ब्रह्मा तु शुन्धति ।। (ऋ. १०.८५.३५)

"It is cleaving, dividing, cutting. Behold the forms of Sūryā. The Brāhmaṇas purify them."

In this verse the meaning of *āśasanam, viśasanam* and *adhikartanam* is not very clear. Wilson basing his interpretation on Sāyana, translates these as 'border cloth', 'head cloth' and 'divided skirt' and Griffith translates them as the fringe, the cloth that decks her head, and triply parted robe. But Weber[23] and Geldner[24] see in this verse a comparison with that of the dismembered sacrificial victim, the priest having power to cleanse the stains of blood away in both cases. The latter seems the more likely interpretation, since the obscure words are evidently connected with roots, meaning cutting or dividing.

Thus ends the marriage ceremony. So after marriage the wife is given a very honourable position in the household. She is in charge of the whole household, is looked upon as guardian of all the members of the family, and is charged to look after their welfare.

MARRIAGE IN THE TIME OF THE ATHARVA-VEDA

In the range of Sanskrit literature the *Sāma* and *Yajur-Veda* follow the *Ṛg-Veda.* But we find little evidence of the social conditions of that period in those texts. The *Artharva-Veda* therefore comes next to the *Ṛg-Veda* in importance, because from it we get plenty of material for the social history of the time.

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[22] According to Weber and others, by Sūryā is meant the Suryā-hymn. But there is no reason why it should not be Sūryā, the bride herself.

[23] Weber – *Ind. Stud.* – Vol. V. p. 190.

[24] Geldner, *Der Ṛg-Veda,* p. 272.X.85.35 (note).

Rituals

The 14th Book of the *Atharva-Veda* deals with marriage rituals. In spite of small difference, the kernel of the ritual of marriage in both the *Ṛg-Veda* and the *Atharva-Veda* is the same, but the ceremony in the *Ṛg-Veda* is much simpler.

Wooers Going to the Bride's Home

The *Atharva-Vedā* also describes the marriage of Sūryā and Soma. The first 16 verses of the 14th Book refer to the Aśvins serving as groomsmen, and going to the house of the bride to ask for her hand on behalf of Soma.

Ritual Bath

One of the most important pre-nuptial ceremonies in the *Atharva-Veda* is that of the ritual bath of the bride, and the priests are requested to fetch the water for the bath so that it might be auspicious for the welfare of the future husband.

आस्यै ब्राह्मणाः स्नपनीर्हंरन्त्ववीरघ्नीरुदजन्त्वापः ।
अर्यम्णो अग्निं पर्येतु पूषन्प्रतीक्षन्ते श्वशुरो देवरश्च ।। (अ. १४–१.३९)

"Let the Brāhmaṇas bring her bathing water. Let them draw up water that slays not a hero, let her go about the fire of Aryaman. O, Pūṣan, father-in-law and brother-in-law are looking on."

Dressing the Bride After Bath

The following verses refer to the dressing of the bride after her bath. Prayers are offered to the goddesses who have made the garment.

या अकृन्तन्नवयन्याश्च तत्निरे या देवीरन्ताँ अभितो ऽददन्त ।
तास्त्वा जरसे सं व्ययन्त्वायुष्मतीदं परि धत्स्व वासः ।। (अ. १४–१.४५)

"They who spun, wove and extended, goddesses who have drawn the ends together, let them wrap you in order that you may attain old age. (As) one long lived put about thee this garment."

In the *Kauśika-Gṛhyasūtra*[25] this verse accompanies the putting of a usual garment upon the bride.

Pāṇigrahaṇa

Now comes the actual marriage ceremony. The bridegroom takes the hands of the bride.[26] Then blessings are given to the bride, who is dressed in her bridal finery. The five verses describing this part of the ceremony are virtually the same as those of the *Ṛg-Veda,* which we have quoted above.[27]

Stepping on the Stone

Then follows another ceremony peculiar to the *Atharva-Veda* and not mentioned in the *Ṛg-Veda.* The bride is made to step on a stone by the bridegroom with the following verse :

स्योनं ध्रुवं प्रजायै घारयामि ते ऽश्मानं देव्याः पृथिव्या उपस्थे ।
तमा तिष्ठानुमाद्या सुवर्चा दीर्घं त आयुः सविता कृणोतु ।। (अ. १४–१·४७)

"I place upon the lap of the divine earth, an auspicious and firm stone for you, for the sake of progeny. Stand on it, greeted with joy, of excellent glory, may Savitar give you long life."

According to *Kauśika*[28] the first half of the verse accompanies the setting of a stone in lump of cow-dung, and the second accompanies the stepping of the bride upon it; the same ceremony is repeated[29] in the new home of the pair after their arrival. The stone is a symbol of firmness and strength. So this ceremony is intended to promote conjugal fidelity.

Removing the Evil Spirits

The evil spirits are then removed by the following *mantra* :

उत्तिष्ठेतः किमिच्छन्तीदमागा अहं त्वेडे अभिभूः स्वाद्गृहात् ।
शून्यैषी निर्ऋते याजगन्धोत्तिष्ठाराते प्र पत मेह रंस्थाः ।। (अ. १४–२·१९)

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[25] *Kauś.* 76.4.

[26] *A.V.* XIV.1.48-52.

[27] See above p. 9.

[28] *Kauś.* 76.15-16.

[29] *Kauś.* 77.17-19.

"Stand up from here, what desire has brought you here? I am your overcomer, O Iḍā, out of my house. You who have come here, seeking the empty, O evil spirit Nirṛti, get up and fly away, do not stay here."
The goddess Nirṛti (Dissolution) is a kind of evil spirit. The *Maitrāyanī Saṃhitā* (III,6.3;I.10.11,16) connects with her dice, women and sleep as the three most evil things. In the king's consecration the queen, who has failed to give him a child is connected with Nirṛti and oblations to that goddess are offered in her house.[30] The fetters of Nirṛti are always evil and punish the wrong doers. The Brahmin student is under a duty of chastity. If he fails in his duty he is required to make an offering of an ass to Nirṛti. He has to clothe himself in the skin of that victim thereafter when he goes begging, and thereby proclaims his sin to everyone.[31]

The occurrence of the name Iḍā as a malevolent spirit is surprising, since this Vedic divinity is normally the personification of the sacrificial offering of milk and butter,[32] and is looked on as holy and benevolent. We can only suggest that this hymn emanated from circles which did not respect the Vedic goddess Iḍā, but knew of an evil spirit of the same name.

Lājahoma

There is another verse with which the wife prays for her husband's long life, while she scatters grains.

इयं नार्युप ब्रूते पूल्यान्यावपन्तिका ।
दीर्घायुरस्तु मे पतिर्जीवाति शरदः शतम् ।। (अ. १४–२·६३)

"This woman scattering shrivelled grains (*pūlya*) appeals 'long live my husband, may he live my husband, may he live hundred autumns'."
According to Kauśika[33] the verse is repeated while the bride

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[30] Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upaniṣad*, p. 211.

[31] *Gaut. Dh.* XXIII.17; *Pār. Gṛ.* III.12.8.

[32] Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upaniṣad*, p. 200.

[33] *Kauś.* 76.17.

stands firm upon the stone and scatters the grains. It is not clear, however, that in the *Atharva-Veda* the *Lājahoma* is in any way connected with the rite of standing on the stone, since it is mentioned in another hymn. It is quite probable that at this period the two ceremonies were not connected.

This ceremony of scattering fried rice or grain is found in all the *Gṛhyasūtras,* where it is described as *Lājahoma.* Even today this is considered to be one of the most important rituals of Hindu marriage. These fried grains are symbols of fruitfulness and prosperity.

Prayers When the Bride Sets Out

Then follows the prayers to make the journey successful when the bridal procession starts for the new house.

भगस्त्वेतो नयतु हस्तगृह्याश्विना त्वा प्र वहतां रथेन ।
गृहान्गच्छ गृहपत्नी यथासो वशिनी त्वं विदथमा वदासि ॥ (अ. १४–१·२०)

"Let Bhaga taking your hand, lead you. Let the Aśvins carry you in the chariot. Go to the house to be the household's mistress, and having control speak to the gathering." According to Kauśika[34] this verse accompanies a complete sprinkling of her new home by the bride, presumably to purify it from witchcraft and evil spirits.

Sitting on the Hide

Another important ritual mentioned in the *Atharva-Veda,* but not in the *Ṛg-Veda,* which can be explained as a fertility rite, is the custom of the bride being seated on a hide, which apparently covered a heap of rushes. At a later period it is specified that the hide should be that of a red bull, and the same may have been the case in this period.

यं वल्वजं न्यस्यथ चर्म चोपस्तृणीथन ।
तद रोहतु सुप्रजा या कन्या विन्दते पतिम् ॥ (अ. १४–२·२२)

"When you throw down the rushes and spread the hide, then let her, who will produce good progeny, mount it, the girl who finds her husband."

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[34] *Kauś.* 77.16.

This ceremony is mentioned in all the *Gṛhyasūtras* as taking place after arrival of the bride at the husband's home. According to Kauśika[35] this verse accompanies the act of preparing a seat for the bride, that she may take a Brāhmaṇa boy into her lap. The ceremony is mentioned in all other *Gṛhyasūtras*, and is performed for obtaining male progeny.

Consummation

Then follows the ceremony when the bride ascended the nuptial bed.

आ रोह तल्पं सुमनस्यमानेह प्रजां जनय पत्ये अस्मै ।
इंद्राणीव सुबुधा बुध्यमाना ज्योतिरग्रा उषसः प्रति जागरासि ।। (अ. १४–२·३१)

"Mount the nuptial bed with favourable mind. Here give birth to children for the husband. Like Indrānī, waking with good awakening, may you awake to meet dawns tipped with light."

देवा अग्रे न्यपद्यन्त पत्नीः समस्पृश्यन्त तन्वऽस्तनूभिः ।
सूर्येव नारी विश्वरूपा महित्वा प्रजावती पत्या सं भवेह ।। (अ. १४–२·३२)

"The gods at first lay with their wives, they embraced (*saṃ-spṛś*) bodies with bodies; like Sūryā, O woman, all-formed, with grandeur, having progeny, here unite with your husband."

Then comes the ceremony after the bridal night when the stained garments are given to the priests for purification.[36]

Further Features of the Ceremonies

A few verses of the *Atharva-Veda*, refer to rites which cannot be definitely placed in the marriage ritual. For instance there are other two verses which are spoken to cows.

इहेदसाथ न परो गमाथेमं गावः प्रजया वर्धयाथ ।
शुभं यनिरुस्त्रियाः सोमवर्चसो विश्वेदेवाः क्रन्निह वो मनांसि ।। (अ. १४–१·३२)

"May you be here, may you not go away; may you, O cows increase this man with progeny, going in beauty, splendour, bright with Soma, may all gods turn your minds here."

[35] *Kauś.* 78.

[36] *A.V.* XIV.2.42

इमं गावः प्रजया सं विशाथायं देवानां न मिनाति भागम् ।
अस्मै वः पूषा मरुतश्च सर्वे अस्मै वो घाता सविता सुवाति ।। (अ. १४–१·३३)

"Come, O kine, dwell around him with offspring; he does not diminish the god's portion; for this man shall Pūṣan, all the Maruts, for him shall Dhātar, and Savitar, quicken (su) you."

In Kauśika[37] this verse is to be recited while paying (in kine) the price for the bride. That would point to the *Ārṣa* form of marriage in the *Atharva-Veda*. But this may not be its original sense, because the second verse refers to the wish for prosperity in cattle.

There is another verse from the *Atharva-Veda* repeated in many other texts with a little variation.

अमोऽहमस्मि सा त्वं सामाहमस्म्यृक्त्वं द्यौरहं पृथिवी त्वम् ।
ताविह सं भवाव प्रजामाजनयावहै ।। (अ. १४–२·७१)

"He am I, she thou; chant am I, verse thou, heaven am I, earth thou; let us (two) come together here; let us generate progeny."

According to Kauśika[38] this verse is uttered after the consummation of the union.

General Conclusions on Marriage in the Time of the Ṛg-Veda and Atharva-Veda

It appears that the rites and rituals of the *g-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda* were comparatively simple. Vedic marriage appears to be the union of two persons of full physical development. The ceremony commences at the bride's house and offerings are made before the Sacrificial Fire. The bridegroom takes the hands of the bride (*pāṇigrahaṇa*).

The festivities being over, the bride is carried to a chariot, in which is also carried the Sacred Fire. *Mantras* are uttered to keep away evil spirits and prevent accident on the way. The journey to the bridegroom's house is called *vahatu*,[39] and this is also the name of the marriage ceremony itself. That the journey with the Sacrificial Fire is a feature of the ceremony of marriage is suggested by the terms *udvāha* and *vivāha,* both derived from the root *vaha,* to carry.

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[37] *Kauś.* 79.17.
[38] *Kauś.* 79.10.
[39] *Śat.* Br. IV.6, 9,20. Macdonell & Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 278.

It is clear that wifehood carries much respect and dignity. She is the mistress of the home, partakes of the domestic duties and religious rites along with her husband, and takes part in family councils.[40]

In the Vedas there is no evidence of divorce. Marriage is considered not as a contract but as a sacrament, which brings about the spiritual union between man and wife by magic *mantras.* It is performed in the presence of the Fire as a witness. It is beyond the power of a human being to cancel the union, and so the marriage is indissoluble. Later, when different forms of marriage are introduced, the presence of Fire is often thought absolutely necessary even in the lower forms. Vātsyāyana[41] describes six different methods by which a girl can be abducted, according to all of which the man is advised to procure fire at the earliest opportunity, to offer oblations to it and with the girl to circumambulate it three times. In the *mantras* used for the marriage ritual elements of both magic and religion are found. The gods Aryamā, Bhaga, Savitā etc. are invoked to make every step free from difficulty. On the other hand, there are *mantras* which seek to drive away evil spirits such as Kṛtyā, Iḍā etc. The invocation of the gods shows that the people looked on marriage as a very solemn religious rite.

It is mentioned that prayers are offered to the goddesses who had made the garment. The conjunction of the ideas of spinning and weaving and destiny is known in Nordic and classical mythology (Norms, Parcae). The humanly woven robe of the bride seems in the verse to be paralleled by a supernatural and invisible one, which is her destiny.

There is also another belief that the bride is likely to be dangerous and prayers are therefore offered to make her harmless.[42] That the relatives of the groom are afraid of the evil coming through the bride is clear from the rituals. Side by side was the belief that all these evil influences could be averted by proper incantation and charm.

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[40] *A.V.* XIV.1.20. See p. 29.

[41] *Kām.* III.5.

[42] See *R.V.* X.85.43 above, p. 18.

It is significant that most of the marriage rites and rituals are similar to those of other Indo-European races. In the Vedas they commence with the ceremonial *Pāṇigrahaṇa,* literally taking of the hand. This rite seems to be common to all Indo-European races. In Rome the ceremony was *dexterum iunctio.*[43] In Iran too the priest joined the right hands of the pair, in the ceremony called *hathvaro.*[44] It is a part of the Christian marriage ceremony also.

The ceremony *Vahatu,* i.e., carrying the bride to her husband's home in a chariot drawn by oxen, was practised in ancient Greece.[45]

Rites for removing evil spirits were observed almost everywhere. There was a general belief that the couple was particularly exposed to other person's magical arts or evil looks or to the attacks by evil spirits. In Russia, among Slavonic peoples, all doors, windows and even the chimneys were closed at the time of the ceremony to prevent malicious witches hurting the bride and the bridegroom.[46] The firing of the guns is a frequent practice at a country wedding both in Europe[47] and in India even today. It is generally accepted that its purpose is to drive away evil spirits. Among Slavonic peoples, wedding guests made a terrific noise outside the bridal chamber while the marriage was being consummated, no doubt for the same purpose.[48]

Invocations to the gods for happiness, long life and progeny were very important in *Ṛg-Vedic* marriage. Similarly in Iranian marriages[49] two priests stood before the bridal pair, whom the elder priest blessed, praying the Ahura Mazda might grant progeny of sons and grandsons,

[43] Roman Marriage (Warde Fowler), *E.R.E.* Vol. VIII, p. 465.

[44] Iranian Marriage (Jivanji Jamshed Modi) *E.R.E.*, Vol. VIII, p.456.

[45] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, p. 497.

[46] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, p. 497.

[47] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, p. 498.

[48] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, pp. 498-499.

[49] Hastings, *E.R.E.*, Vol. VIII, p. 456.

abundant means, strong friendship, bodily strength, and long life of 150 years. One of the important pre-nuptial ceremonies among ancient and modern Hindus as also among other Indo-European peoples is the ceremonial bath of the bride and of the bridegroom. In the *Atharva-Veda* there is reference to the bath of the bride, and priests are requested to fetch the water for the bath, that it may be auspicious for the future husband.[50] The remarkable manner in which the Brāhmaṇas actually perform the humble act of bringing water for the bride is surely indicative of the respect in which she was held. In Greece too, the bath of the bride was one of the important pre-nuptial ceremonies. In Athens the water was fetched from the spring of Kallirrhoe, jars of peculiar shape being used for the purpose.[51] In Rome it was the custom to receive the bride with water and fire.[52] The ceremonial or ritual bath was indeed a very popular feature in marriage in many European countries as in ancient and modern India.

There is another marriage rite mentioned in the *Atharva-Veda*, that of treading on the stone by the bride. Evidently the rite symbolises the very natural desire of making the union firm and strong, and may have its origin in the ancient custom of oath taking on a stone. The old Danish historian Saxo-Grammaticus tells us that "the ancients, when they were to choose a king, were wont to stand on stones planted on the ground and to proclaim their votes in order to foreshadow, from steadfastness of the stones that the deed would be lasting."[53]

The *Atharva-Vedic* custom of the bride being seated on a hide is practised among many of the Indo-European races. The hide may have been the hide of the same cow as was slain in *Maghā* for the marriage.

The *Gṛhyasūtras* state that both the bride and the bridegroom should sit on the hide. In Roman marriage a victim was offered to a deity and the couple had to sit on its skin.[54]

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[50] *A.V.* XIV. I. 39-40.

[51] Hastings, *E.R.E.*, Vol. VIII, p. 465, by W. Warde Fowler.

[52] Hastings, E.R.E., Vol. VIII, p. 465, by W. Warde Fowler

[53] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Vol. I, part 1, p. 160.

Among Slavonic peoples the couple used to sit on a fur.[55] In Esthonia the bride was seated on a blanket spread upon a fur.[56]

Hartland thinks that the rite was intended to promote fertility.[57] But Westermarck[58] suggests that this rite came into practice because it was considered dangerous for the bride to sit on the ground, because the ground was believed to be haunted by evil spirits.

Since we find that the essential marriage rituals of the *Ṛg-Veda* and the *Atharva-Veda* are similar to those of the other Indo-European races, we can reasonably assume that the rites and rituals connected with Vedic marriage had already become a common heritage before the Indo-Europeans came and settled down in India.

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[54] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, p. 470.

[55] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, p. 470.

[56] Westermarck H.H.M., Vol. II, p. 470.

[57] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, p. 470.

[58] Westermarck, H.H.M., Vol. II, p. 470.

CHAPTER II

MARRIAGE RITUALS IN THE GṚHYASŪTRAS

There are various *Gṛhyasūtras* of different schools, and there are variations in rituals and *mantras* according to the custom of each *śākhā,* which may perhaps be accounted for by the variation in Vedic rites and rituals prevalent in different parts of the country.

To the *Ṛg-Veda* belongs the *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra.* Connected with the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* is the *Gṛhyasūtra* of Āśvalāyana. The chief *Gṛhyasūtra* of the *Sāmaveda* is that of Gobhila. Besides the texts of the *Sāmaveda* the latter presupposes the *Mantra Brāhmaṇa,* the collection of *mantras* in ritual order, which are quoted by Gobhila. The *Gṛhyasūtra* of Khādira belong to the Drāhyāyana school and is very similar to that of Gobhila. The *Gṛhyasūtra* of the White *Yajurveda* is that of Pāraskara. It is closely connected with the *Śrautasūtra* of Kātyāyana.[1] The later law books of Yājñavalkya bear evidence of the influence of Pāraskara's work.

The *Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra* belongs to the Black *Yajurveda.* This *Gṛhyasūtra* forms two books (26-27) of the *Āpastamba Kalpasūtra.* The first of those books is a *Mantrapāṭha* of a collection of formulæ accompanying the ceremonies.

The *Kauśika Sūtra* belongs to the *Atharva-Veda.* The *Mānava Gṛhyasūtra* is closely connected with the *Śrautasūtra* attributed to the same author.[2]

The development of the *Sūtra* literature is generally assigned to the period from 500 to 200 B.C.[3] The comparative study of the Vedic rituals and those of the *Gṛhya-*

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[1] Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature,* p. 244.

[2] Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature,* pp. 244-251.

[3] Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstras* in the chronological table, Vol. II, part 1, latest.

sūtras shows that the essential elements of the marriage ceremony of the *Gṛhyasūtras* go back to the Vedic or Indo-European period. The ceremony is much the same in form as that described in the Vedas, but it is amplified analogy and ritualistic logic.

RITUALISM IN HINDU DOMESTIC LIFE

The rituals prescribed and enunciated by the *Gṛhyasūtras* are much more complex and are entirely dictated by a priestly and sacerdotal order. Even the minutest detail did not escape the attention of the Brāhmaṇas, who sought to rationalize the Hindu socio-religious system, long after the Vedic Aryans had laid its foundation. In course of centuries, the simple ideology and rituals of marriage of Vedic times must have come into more or less close contact with those that prevailed among the indigenous peoples as well as foreigners who entered India from time to time. The Aryan society was certainly more organized and intellectually on a higher level than that of the peoples whom it encountered; the priestly class were its recognized leaders, and they made it their task to integrate or incorporate the indigenous as well as foreign elements, whenever they could, without disturbing the basic ideology and structure of the Vedic marriage system and its rites and rituals.

As one goes through the elaborate details of the ceremony, it becomes more and more unmistakable that the leaders of the Hindu socio-religious organization were very anxious to retain this Vedic framework, and even to add to it by incorporating *mantras,* prayers and rituals that were no doubt Vedic and Brahmanical but not originally connected with marriage. Again and again the appeal is made to the Vedas; verses are cited from these texts, and, on the whole, it seems that the rituals too are drawn from them. It also appears that the Brāhmaṇas, who presumably took the lead in amplifying and rationalising the system, were keen on keeping their hold through such elaboration and amplification, at any rate on that section of society that had come within the orbit of their intellectual, cultural and religious influence, though admittedly their injunctions were more rigidly applied to their own class than to any other caste or class.

It is quite clear from a study of the Vedas and the *Gṛhyasūtras* that the whole life of the Vedic Aryans was ritualistic in character. The life of man and his family were all regulated by rites and rituals from birth to cremation.[4]

The first ceremony, *Puṃsavana* aims at the obtaining of a son. At this rite a pounded shoot of a banyan tree is placed in the wife's right nostril.

After the *Jātakarma* (the birth-rite) the *Nāmakarma* (giving the child its name) takes place, generally on the tenth day after birth. In the third year takes place the tonsure (*Cuḍā-karaṇa*), when the boy's hair is first cut.

The most important ceremony of boyhood is *Upanayana,* which takes place in the 8th year in the case of Brāhmaṇas,[5] and a few years later in the case of Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas. The spiritual significance of the initiation is that it fits the boy to study the Vedas. Besides his studies the daily duties of the student are regulated in detail, and include collection of fuel, devotions at morning and evening, begging food, sleeping on the ground etc.

In the 16th year the rite of shaving the beard is performed, when a couple of cattle is offered as a fee, from which the ceremony derived its name, *Godāna.*

The conclusion of his studies, which last for about 12 years, is then ceremonially performed with a sacred bath, by which he becomes a *snātaka,* a graduate.

Then comes the most important sacrament of life, i.e., marriage. The main elements of this ceremony belong rather to the sphere of magic than to the sacrificial cult, and are considered below in detail. After marriage the duties of the new householder are ritually regulated. The

[4] Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 252-257.

[5] अष्टाब्दे कुर्वीत ब्राह्मणस्यो

five great sacrifices are to be daily offered by every householder. There are minor periodic sacrifices, connected with the building and entering of a new house, as also with agricultural functions.

Finally, funeral rites are prescribed, and the worship of manes. Detailed directions about cremation are given. After death, the relatives are "impure" for a period of up to three days. Generally after the tenth day the bones are collected and ceremonially placed in an urn with utterance of a *Ṛg-Vedic mantra.* Then a *śrāddha* or offering given with reverence is presented to the soul, which is supposed to remain separated from the manes.

As regards marriage, the rites and rituals of the *Ṛg-Veda* appear to have been very simple.[6] The actual marriage commences with the act of *Pāṇigrahaṇa.* Gods are invoked to make the newly married couple happy and prosperous in the newly established life. Evil spirits are removed by appropriate *mantras.* The bride is then carried away in a chariot to her new home.

The scheme of marriage is the same in the *Atharva-Veda* but the ceremonies are much amplified and elaborated. Some new rituals are added to the original *Ṛg-Vedic* rituals. The pre-nuptial bath of the bride has been raised to a ritual, and priests are requested to fetch the water for the bath so that it may be auspicious for the future couple. Another important rite, the bride's sitting on the red bull's hide after the marriage, is a further addition in the *Atharva-Veda.*

In the *Gṛhyasūtra* the rites and rituals of the *Ṛg-Veda* and the *Atharva-Veda* are even more amplified by additions and adaptations. But the *Sūtras* maintain the general framework of Vedic rituals. In every phase of the marriage ceremonial, all the acts, even the most insignificant are for auspicious and bright future and are in consequence raised to ritual status. At every step gods are invoked and evil spirits dispersed, indicating the growing influence of magic.

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[6] See Chapter 1.

Magical Rites

Besides the main religious ceremony of marriage, the other ceremonies can be divided into two sections magical and symbolical. According to the *Gṛhyasūtras* marriage is supposed to be open to danger at every stage, which can only be got rid of by magic formulæ. The bride is especially susceptible to evil influences. The idea of compulsion is inherent in magic, if one performs a ritual according to prescribed rules, the evil spirits are forced to withdraw. In the *Gṛhyasūtras* most of the rites are magical. But the peculiarity of the *Gṛhyasūtra* rituals is the belief that evil influences could be averted by seeking the favour of beneficient spirits, who could be invoked by appropriate *mantras* or worship. So in the *Gṛhya* ceremonies the magic rituals get mixed with religious rites. This kind of remedy differs from pure magic in that it invokes the grace of divine agency rather than charms away the evil by the force of spells. Once belief in magic became so dominant, magic rituals tended to increase and new rites were more and more absorbed into marriage rituals of the *Gṛhyasūtras*, whereas in the *Ṛg-Veda* the magical element of the marriage ceremony is much less in evidence. In ancient India magical practices entered largely into the sacred ritual, and many of the ceremonies performed by the priests at the great sacrifice are in no way to be distinguished from the practices of magicians. In all the rites connected with marriage it is almost impossible to distinguish between magic and religion. To secure the welfare of the bride, solemn services and prayers to the gods are prescribed, side by side with charms against evil spirits.

Magic is essentially connected with belief in demons or evil spirits. Its practices are invariably accompanied by spells which in early India were little distinguished from the prayers addressed to the gods. Thus the demons who cause diseases or other evils are constantly invoked, worshipped and propitiated. As the demons are enemies of mankind, it is natural that they should be more anxious to injure the new born infant, the embryo, or even the potential mother, before her child is conceived. Therefore there are numerous charms and rites concerned with protection of the mother and child against the possible attack of evil spirits.

Two ways were believed to be effective in removing these hostile influences. The first was to deceive and cheat them in every way. Actions such as fasting, or refraining from sexual intercourse, were intended to forbid their entrance. The use of water for washing away every kind of evil was common among all the branches of Indo-European races. Thus the bride is washed to rid her of all evil influences. According to *Hiraṇyakeśin Gṛhyasūtra*[7] the face is wiped after an evil dream.

One of the best known rites in all systems of magic is to transfer evil to some other person or thing. The bride's garment after marriage is hung up on a tree or post, so that the evil influences in it may be disposed of. Similarly the cloth with which she is wiped is given to the guardian of the maiden, who puts it in a cow-stall or hangs it up in a wood.[8]

The idea of transference of the evil to some other thing is quite familiar to the primitive mind. When a Moor has a headache, he starts beating a lamb or a goat, believing that the headache will thus be transferred to the animal. In Morocco most wealthy Moors used to keep a wild boar in their stables, in order that the *jinn* or evil spirits might be diverted from the horses and enter into the boar.[9]

Examples of the transference of evil are common in many parts of Europe. In Rome the cure for fever was to pare the patient's nails, and stick the parings with wax on a neighbour's door before sunrise; the fever then passed from the sick man to the neighbour.[10] In Northamptonshire, Devonshire and Wales, a popular cure for cough was to put hair of the patient's head between two slices of buttered bread and give the sandwich to a dog to whom the cough was thus transferred.[11] In the Greek island of Karpathos the priest would tie a red thread round the neck of a sick person. Next morning the thread was removed and the relatives tied it to a tree, to which the fever was thus believed to be transferred.[12]

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[7] *Hir. Gr.* I.16.5.

[8] *Kauś.* I.XXVI.I, A.V.XIV.

[9] Frazer, *Golden Bough,* Part VI, 3rd ed., p. 31.

[10] Frazer, *Golden Bough,* Part VI, 3rd. ed. p. 47.

Symbolic Rites

There are certain rites in the *Gṛhyasūtras* which are mainly symbolical. In ancient times symbolism played a very important part in human life. The rites are easily perceived to be symbolical and we may therefore investigate their meaning on this basis. If we compare the Indian symbolic rites with the rites of other Indo-European countries or primitive tribes we find some similarity of ideas. These rites, however, are not always performed to gain a definite result. The satisfaction is in having performed a ritual as a religious duty. In the performance of the rite the performer feels that he has made a small contribution, which it is both his privilege and his duty to do, to the maintenance of that order of the universe of which man and nature are interdependent parts.[13]

Sometimes we find that the same symbol is used on different occasions. But there is a common element of meaning, and by comparing together the various uses of symbols we may discover what that common element is. To get good luck and happiness one method prescribed is to avoid the touch of anything dangerous; another is the touching of things which are beneficial. Thus the bride is placed on a bull's hide to ensure fertility. The placing of her (or, in the initiation ceremony, the student) on a stone is intended to attain firmness.

PRELIMINARY MARRIAGE CEREMONIES

Selection of the Bride

In the selection of the bride some girls are to be avoided. According to Āpastamba[14] one should avoid girls with the name of a *nakṣatra,* river or tree, and also those the last consonant of whose names are *r* or *l.* Examples of these names are given by the commentator as Karā, Kalā, Suśīlā, Gaurī etc. In *Kāmasūtra*[15] we also find the advice to avoid women whose names have *l* or *r* as their last consonant.

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[11] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Part VI, 3rd. ed. p. 51.

[12] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Part VI, 3rd ed. p. 55.

[13] Radcliffe Brown, *Structure and Function of Primitive Society*, pp. 144-145.

It is not clear why these names are held to be bad or unlucky. But among primitive peoples we find that anything, such as a place, a word or name, an occasion, or even a day of the week or a period of the year, may be the object of ritual avoidance or taboo. It is hard to explain why the use of words for rivers, trees, and *nakṣatras* as components of proper names is considered unlucky. The *l* and *r* are widely looked on as inauspicious letters.

The *Gṛhyasūtras* recommend the selection of the bride by means of earth clods.[16] Such earth clods are to be gathered from an altar, a furrow, a pool, a cow stable, to gambling place, a place where corpses are burnt, from sterile soil, and from a place where four roads meet. The ninth clod is a mixture of all. The girl is to pick up one of the earth clods. If she chooses one of the first four clods or the mixed one she is considered to be lucky. If she chooses a lump of earth taken from a field that yields two crops a year, her offspring will be rich in food; if from the earth of a *vedī* (altar), rich in holy lustre; if from the pool which does not dry up, rich in everything; if from a gambling place where four roads meet, wandering to different directions; if from a barren spot, poor; while if she chooses the earth from a cremation ground, she will bring death to her husband *Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra*[17] prescribes a similar ceremony, but with some difference in the nature of the choice of objects. In the texts, the girl is asked to take one of the following things: different kinds of seeds mixed together, loose earth from a sacrificial altar, earth clods from a field, cowdung, and earth clods from a cemetery. The former objects bring prosperity while the last is regarded as very inauspicious. *Mānava-Gṛhyasūtra*[18] says that the bridegroom should test the girl with eight clods. One from the furrows of the field, one from the altar, one from where *durvā* grass grows, one from cowdung, one from the bottom of a fruit bearing tree, one from the cemetery, one from a road, and one from saline soil. These he should lay down in front of the god's house (temple) and then ask the girl to choose one from among them. If she takes the clod from the cemetery, the road, or the saline soil he should reject her.

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[14] *Āp. Gṛ.* — I.3.12-13.

[15] *Kām.* III.1.

[16] *Gobh. Gṛ.* II.5.3.9; *Āśv. Gṛ.* I.5.1.4.

[17] *Āp..Gṛ.* I.3.15-17.

Among other Indo-European peoples there are similar practices. In Norway, the bridegroom puts three bottles on the table at Christmas, containing water, beer, and wine. Then the future bride comes before him. If she drinks water she will be poor. If she drinks beer, they will get on well together, and if she drinks wine they will be rich.[19]

The custom of omen reading in connection with the selection of the bride is practised by some of the primitive tribes of India. Among the Muṇḍās the ultimate selection of the bride rests not in human hands but on the reading of certain omens known as *chenre-uri.*[20] This is performed in the following manner. When the proposed match is considered desirable by the guardian of the girl and the go-between, they appoint a day for *chenre-uri.* On that day the go-between and the guardian of the groom with two other relatives start for the girl's village. On the way the party mark every omen, good or bad. Among omens considered good are: a person carrying a bamboo fishing trap; a person carrying an axe, a spade or a shovel; and a cow bellowing. If however, the party marks a bad omen, they forthwith return home and negotiations fall through.

Selecting the Auspicious Day

All marriages in the first instance should take place on an auspicious day and propitious *nakṣatra,* which is also mentioned in the *Ṛg-Veda.*[21] According to the Śāṅkhāyana[22] and Āśvalāyana,[23] marriage should be celebrated on an auspicious day in the increasing phase of the Moon and during the northern course of the Sun. According to Bharadvāja,[24] the northern course of the Sun is sanctified to the gods. Even so, one can also marry during the southern course of the Sun, which is sanctified to the manes, as the wedding has also a connection with the household spirits. One can marry at midday, which is sanctified to the *Ṛṣis*, or in the afternoon, which is sanctified to the *Pitṛs* and *Bhaga*.

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[18] *Mān. Gṛ.* I.7.9-10.

[19] Winternitz, *D.K.A.W.*, Vol. XL, p. 33.

[20] Sarat Ray, *Mundas and their Country*, pp. 437-438.

Baudhāyana[25] says—

शुचिस्तपस्तपस्यवर्जमित्येके

"some exclude *Suci, Tapas*, and *Tapasya* (as auspicious months for marriage)."
The months of *Tapas* and *Tapasya* are identical with *Māgha* and *Phālguna*, while *Suci* is the summer month of *Āṣāda*. Similarly Āpastamba[26] says that all seasons are fit for marriage with the exception of the two months of the season of *Śiśira* and the last summer month. Āpastamba[27] again says that all the *nakṣatras* which are otherwise stated to be auspicious are fit for marriage.
The choosing of an auspicious day among the Indians is very important even now. In almost all parts of India the wedding preparation begins with the bride and bridegroom having their horoscopes cast, and asking the astrologer to select an auspicious day on the basis of the horoscopes.

The choosing of the day for the wedding plays a great part among other Indo-European peoples also. Indians, Greeks, Germanic peoples and Estonians all agreed that getting married when the Moon is on the wane was bad,[28] as it led to want and scarcity in the new household. Among modern Parsis, both betrothal and marriage take place on an auspicious day, the day of the full moon being chosen for betrothal.[29] Curiously enough, this belief is also found in some of the primitive tribes. The Kachins of Burma fear their lives will be shortened if the marriage takes place in the waning moon. The Saoras of Rajmahal hills believe that consummation during the waning or darkening moon results in general bad luck and the barrenness of the wife.[30]

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[21] See above p. 8.
[22] *Śānkh. Gṛ.* 1.5.5.
[23] *Āśv. Gṛ.* I.4.1.
[24] *Bhār. Gṛ.* 1.11.
[25] *Baudh. Gṛ.* I.1.18-20.
[26] *Āp. Gṛ.* 1.2.12.
[27] *Āp. Gṛ.* 1.2.13.
[28] Winternitz, *D.K.A.W.*, Vol. XL, p. 30.

It seems that the custom originally grew out of a belief in sympathetic magic, and on a very widespread and unexplained belief in some relation between human life and the Moon, perhaps also the Sun and the stars.

Celebration of marriage during the time of the waxing moon cannot, however, be always traced to this belief. In Dukkala in Morocco marriage is said to be held in the full moon in order to be safe from robbers.[31] Such very practical considerations may have had some influence in the choice of the bright half of the month, and especially the full moon, as the auspicious time. In a community, without street lighting and with very inadequate domestic illumination, the advantages of such a choice are obvious.

Negotiation

At the next stage, wooers are sent to the bride's father to negotiate the match. According to the *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*[32] the bridegroom sends the wooers on their journey to the bride's home. They take with them fruits, flowers, barley and a pot of water, all of which are evidently symbols of fertility. When the negotiations are concluded and the matter pleases both the parties they touch the full vessels into which have been put flowers, fried grains, fruits and barley. The priest of the girl's family puts the vessel on her head with the *Ṛg-Vedic* verse *ā naḥ prajām* etc.[33]

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[29] Hastings, *E.R.E.*, Vol. VIII, p. 455.

[30] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, p. 568.

[31] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, p. 572.

[32] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.6.1-6.

[33] *R.V.*X.85.43, cf. Chap. I, p. 15.

The fertility motive is clear not only in the symbolical objects, but also in the *mantra* quoted above.

Sacrifice Made by the Bridegroom

The bridegroom makes sacrifices after the bride's father has declared his assent. For this purpose, he besmears a quadrangular space with cowdung. The southern side of the space is recommended to be used for the rites which belong to the manes, and the northern side for those devoted to the gods. Also, water is to be sprinkled over a middle line drawn from south to north.[34] Here *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra* differs from the *Śrauta Sūtra* attributed to the same author, which says that the ceremonies sacred to the manes are directed towards the south.[35] The worshipper should consider the south-eastern direction, sacred to Agni, also as that to which the ceremonies are to be directed which are sacred to the manes. The *Śrauta Sūtras* prescribe that the ceremonies which are sacred to the gods should be directed towards the east.[36]

The commentary on *Viṣṇu Smṛti,* which is later than our period, mentions that a wedding ceremony is said actually to have begun when the *Nāndimukha,* or *Śrāddha* preliminary to marriage, has taken place.[37]

The Ritual Bath

At the beginning of the wedding, the purificatory bath of the bride is prescribed in all the *Gṛhyasūtras.* The girl is supposed to be under the influence of an evil spirit that is to be washed away with water. This ceremony is first attested in the *Atharva-Veda,* but though not mentioned in the *Ṛg-Veda* it is quite possible that a similar ceremony took place in the earlier period, since the marriage hymn of the *Ṛg-Veda* does not, as far as we know, give a comprehensive picture of the rites, and similar practices are attested among other Indo-European peoples. The basic idea behind it is that there is some dangerous influence in the bride that is to be washed away with water. Āpastamba[38] mentions that the bridegroom sends the Brāhmaṇas to fetch the water for the bride with the following verse :—

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[34] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.7.1-8.

[35] *Śāṅkh. Śraut.* I.1.14.

[36] *Śāṅkh. Śraut.* I.1.13.

[37] *Viṣṇu,* XXII.53 (Nand), *S.B.E.,* Vol. 7, note.

> व्युक्षत्क्रूरमुदचन्त्वाप आस्यै ब्राह्मणा स्नपनँ हरन्तु ।
> अवीरघ्नीरुदचन्त्वापः ॥ (M. I. 1·7)

"They are to draw water, the Brāhmaṇas are to fetch the bath water in order to wash away evil, water that should not bring bad luck to the husband is to be drawn." The explanation of *Vyukṣat krūram* is doubtful. Winternitz[39] translates the first word as a participle depending on *snapam*. Haradatta explains it as *yad apām krūram tad apagacchatāt;* "may what is harmful in water depart." We have already found in the *Atharva-Veda*[40] that the priests bring the bath water. The *Gobhila Gṛhyasūtra* deviates from the other *Sūtras* in stating that the girl is to be washed with *klītaka,*[41] barley and beans.[42] The *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*[43] recommends that the girl be washed up to her head with water that has been made fragrant by herbs and fruits together with scents. The water is sprinkled by a friend three times over her head, so that her whole body is drenched.

This rite is mentioned in all the *Gṛhyasūtras*, but different *Gṛhyasūtras* specify it at different stages of marriage. In Āpastamba it is presumably performed after the arrival of the bridegroom at the bride's home. According to *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*[44] the bath of the bride takes place on the eve of the departure for her husband's home.

In the *Mānava Gṛhyasūtra*[45] the ceremony is described in the following way. After having kindled the fire in the stable, the bridegroom leads the bride towards the fire, holding the seam of the dress, saying the verse *aghoracakṣu* etc.[46] He embraces her and leads her to the fire. Then they circumambulate a carriage. This, presumably, refers to the carriage intended to take the bride to her new home. Then they walk between the fire and the carriage, and thus he places her below the left yoke-hole in the right pole; he then pulls out the pin, puts a piece of gold therein and pours water on her through the hole.

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[38] *Āp. Gṛ.* I.IV.7.

[39] Winternitz, *D.K.A.W.*, Vol. XL, p. 43.

[40] *A.V.* XIV.1.31, See Chap. I, p. 18.

[41] *Klītaka* – (grains) prepared as dough or paste – *Gobh. Gṛ.* II.1.10, prepared from sweet root — *Āśv. Gṛ.* III.8.8. A plant with a poisonous root – *Āp. Śraut.* XV.3.16 (Monier Williams).

[42] *Gobh. Gṛ.* II.1.10.

[43] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.11.2.

[44] *Śāṅkh..Gṛ.* I.11.

[45] *Mān. Gṛ.* I.10.5-7.

The peculiar ceremony of the hole of the yoke is connected by Haradatta with the Āpālā hymns in the *Ṛg-Veda*.[47] The story of Apālā is related by Haradatta in the following manner. There was a girl named Apālā. She was afflicted with white leprosy and no one would marry her. Then, to pay reverence to Indra, she stepped into the river in order to bathe. She was carried away by the current, and saw the soma plant. This she chewed with her teeth and presented the juice to Indra. Indra drank it and let the water flow through the three holes of the yoke of the carriage, drenched her three times with the water, and made her as bright as the Sun.

The use of the yoke in different contexts in the *Gṛhyasūtras* at first seems to be a reminder of this story. The result anticipated by these acts is not quite clear. They may be for protecting the woman against sickness in her married state, if we accept the explanation of Haradatta. But this connection of the Apālā story may well be a later development. This does not seem to be the only purpose of the use of the yoke in the marriage ceremonies. It must also have had a deeper magical significance. Did it indicate the bride's subjugation to her husband ? Or did it signify the domestic life of the married couple, which is generally referred to as a chariot drawn by the two partners ?

That the bath of the bride is the most important wedding preparation among most of the Indo-European peoples has been seen in the previous chapter.[48] Even in the India

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[46] *R.V.* X.85.44, See below pp. 144-45.
[47] *R.V.* VIII.91.7.
[48] See above p. 26.

डा. डिल्ली रमण रेग्मी
कल्याणी रेग्मी स्मारक
पुस्तकालय
30775

of today the bath preceding a wedding plays an important part in the ceremony.

In most parts of India both the bride and the bridegroom take a bath before the wedding. In many parts of eastern Bengal the ceremony of fetching water for the bath of the bride and bridegroom is called *Jalabharana*.[49] Married women of the house fill their pitchers from the nearest stream. Musicians accompany them, and appropriate songs are sung. An open space in the house is decorated with mango leaves and vermilion spots. The bride and the bridegroom are seated on the decorated platform where they are anointed with turmeric pastę and bathed in water brought by the women.

Clothing and Anointing the Bride

After the bath the bridegroom presents the bride with a new garment. Then he anoints her, repeating prayers to the Viśvedeva.[50] He gives the quill of a porcupine, a string of three twisted threads, and a mirror into her right hand with the following verse :—

रूपंरूपं प्रतिरूपो वभूव तदस्य रूपं प्रतिचक्षणाय ।
इन्द्रो मायाभिः पुरुरूप ईयते युक्ता ह्यस्य हरयः शता दश ।। (ऋ. ६–४७.१८)

"Indra, has assumed various forms, and such is his forms for us to look on. Indra, multiform by his illusions, proceeds (to his worshippers), for the horses yoked to his car, are a thousand."

This verse is rather misplaced here. Originally it was presumably uttered at the time of the bride's departure from her father's house. Neither the quill of the porcupine nor the string of three twisted threads of the mirror have anything to do with the *Ṛg-Vedic mantra* just cited, yet it seems that they are supposed to have some significance, perhaps magical.

In an Assyrian incantation we find directions for removing a disease from a man, by binding to his limbs a double cord of black and white threads, which is tied on the patient's limbs and then cut off and thrown away.[51] It is possible that the twisted thread in the *Gṛhyasūtras* has the same significance. If so, the purpose or result which it was imagined could be obtained by his act was to protect the woman against sickness in her married state. This practice was presumably taken from tribal customs.

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[49] Literally water-filling.

[50] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.12., *R.V.* X.85.47, cf. Chap. I, p. 15.

The looking glass was probably used as a charm against the evil eye, because it was supposed to throw back the malignant glance. Among the Hiaina of Morocco wild rue and rock-salt are tied to the swaddling cloth of the infant and to the belt of the mother, while alum and a few shells are tied to the swaddled child to safeguard it against the evil eye, and for both purposes a looking glass is put underneath its head and left there until the child is old enough to eat ordinary food. Among the Ait Yusi, also of Morocco, a looking glass, together with some salt and the knife with which the navel-string was cut, is similarly placed underneath the head of the infant. The looking glass, which is left there for forty days, is said to protect the child from the evil eye.[52] In the marriage ceremony even today in some parts of Bengal the bride and bridegroom each hold a brass mirror in their hands on the day of marriage, and the bridegroom puts the vermilion on the parting of the bride's hair with the aid of this mirror, whereon it has been placed in a line down the centre of the disc, by rubbing it upon her head. The bride's mirror plays no active part in the ritual, but is held all the time.[53]

Returning to the ceremony as described in the *Sūtras*. at the next stage the bride's relation tie to her body a red and black woollen or linen cord with three amulet gems, repeating the *Ṛg-Vedic* verse, '*Nīlalohitam*'.[54] These are also magical rites. This is a charm against the evil spirit Kṛtyā, who is already mentioned in the *Ṛg-Veda*. In the *Gṛhyasūtras* the special magical rite is performed to avert this evil female spirit. But whereas this verse apparently referred originally to rites performed after consummation, it is here used in the course of the ceremony. Was the rite, using the red and black cord, developed on the basis of the verse, misunderstood by the time the *Sūtras* were composed. The covering with the new garment, which is already indicated in the *Atharva-Veda* is connected directly with the bath and accompanied by *mantras* and appropriate rituals. According to Āpastamba[55] just after the bath the bridegroom wraps the bride in the new dress.

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[51] Thomson, *Semitic Magic*, pp. 164-65.

[52] Westermarck, *R.B.M.*, Vol. II, pp. 381-382.

[53] From personal knowledge.

[54] *R.V.* X.85.28, cf. Chap. I, p. 16.

Śāṇkhāyana[56] mentions this ceremony as follows: With the permission of the young girl who escorted the groom to the bride's house, he gives her the garment with the following verse :—

रभ्यासीदनुदेयी नाराशंसीन्योचनी ।
सूर्याया भद्रमिद्वासो गाथयैति परिष्कृतम् ॥ (ऋ, १०–८५.६.)

"Raibhi[57] was the bridal friend, and Nārāśāṃsī led her home. Sūryā's robe was lovely to see; by a hymn beautified she moves."

This verse is also rather misplaced here. Originally it was perhaps uttered at the time of the bride's departure from her father's house.

The custom of using colours to distract attention from the thing to be protected is common in India.

In various parts of India one sees all kinds of strange things painted in gaudy colours on the exterior of many of the houses, so that if any unlucky glance fell upon any dwelling it may be attracted to and rest upon these representations, rather than on the house or its inmates.

Wearing of amulets has always appealed to the simple mind. The English peasantry in some places still believe in so-called lucky stones as a protection against the evil eye[58] and the use of amulets has far from vanished even in modern urban civilization.

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[55] *Āp. Gṛ.* I.IV.8.

[56] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.12.

[57] The words *Raibhi*, *Nārāśāṃsī* and *Gāthā* are taken as personifications of song and praise — Wilson, *Ṛg-Veda* translation, Vol. VI, note on p. 365.

[58] Mrs. Murray Aynslay, *S.B.W.*, pp. 140-141.

After *Pāṇigrahaṇa,* the eyes of both the bride and bridegroom are anointed with collyrium. Then little arrows are shot in all the directions. Arrows are also used among many tribes to expel evil spirits. Among the Oraons, the father of the bride puts an iron headed arrow into her hands at the time of her departure to the husband's home to expel the evil spirits of her father's village.[59] Among high class Hindus of the Punjab the bridegroom always carries a weapon with him to drive away evil influences. Among the Bhīls of Central India the bridegroom touches the "marriage-shed"[60] with a sword.[61]

The anointment with collyrium is presumably done to protect the couple against the evil eye. The belief in the ill-effects of the evil eye is fully held in India at the present day. Even now Hindu mothers put a black spot of collyrium on the forehead or cheek of their children as a protection against *nazar** or the evil eye. The Hindustani word *nazar* is much more comprehensive than the English expression by which it is usually translated. It implies the ill effects which may result from the gaze of any one, even of the most benevolent and affectionate. Here in the marriage ceremony bride and bridegroom are protected from the *nazar* of all the people, good or bad, by anointment with collyrium.

Anointment is an important ceremony in the *Gṛhyasūtras*. The bride's father anoints the pair while the bridegroom recites the verse : — "May the Viśvedevas, may the waters unite our hearts. May Mātariśvan, may Dhātṛ, may Deṣṭṛ join us".[62]

Prof. Pandey thinks that this anointment is symbolical of *sneha* or love and consequently of uniting the pair.[63] But this anointment may also be practised as a preventive against the evil eye, as well as against other influences. Among the Ait Waryager of Morocco, when an infant is forty days old, its crown is smeared with *henna* (Mehndi) as a protection against fleas, lice and the evil eye, and this is frequently repeated until it grows older; and the same colouring matter is applied to the chest and feet of their grey-hounds, which they are more anxious to preserve from envious looks as they have not many of them.[64]

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[59] Westermarck, *H.H.M.,* Vol. II, p. 499.

[60] In India marirage ceremonies are always performed in an enclosed place, generally in the courtyard.

[61] Westermarck, *H.H.M.,* Vol. II, p. 500.

* Not to be confused with the same expression meaning "present" to royalty.

[62] *R.V.* X.85.47. See above p. 15.

[63] Pandey, *H.S.,* p. 371.

At Moorish weddings the custom prevails of painting the bride and bridegroom with *henna,* which is considered to contain much virtue, and is therefore used as a means of purification or protection on occasions when people think they are exposed to supernatural dangers, as for example, at the religious feasts. The *henna* is applied to the bride's hands and feet.[65]

In the present day Bengal there is a ceremony of anointment with turmeric. On the day of the marriage the relatives smear and anoint the body of the bride with a paste made of turmeric and oil and bathe her. In West Bengal this ceremony, called *Gātraharidrā,* is performed on both the bride and bridegroom one or two days before marriage. In some districts the bride is anointed with the remains of the tumeric used to anoint the bridegroom.[66]

Similar ceremonies are practised among the many primitive tribes of India. Among the Muṇḍās some female relatives of the bridegroom come to the bride's home to anoint her with oil and turmeric. The bride then goes to the home of the bridegroom and anoints him similarly.[67] Among the Godavars of Vishākhāpatam the bridegroom is smeared all over his body with turmeric and then bathed.[68]

Dance of Girls

After that four or eight young women (widows excluded) are entertained with vegetable, food and *surā.* The attendant girls perform a dance four times.[69] This rite seems to be the survival of a primitive custom. Dance and music have always been and still are important elements of marriage ceremony among many primitive tribes and civilized peoples of the world. In Indian villages, they are still very common. Among the Oraons, dancing girls along with other persons (including an old man who carries a small wooden disc on his head, a woman with a baby, a woman with a pot of water and others,) start for the bride's village in a procession from the bridegroom's village. When the groom's party reaches the bride's village, the girls from the boy's side form lines and join up with the girls on the bride's side. The songs and music that accompany the dance on such occasion are often erotic in meaning and frankly suggestive.[70]

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[64] Westermarck, *R.B.M.*, Vol. II, p. 443.

[65] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, p. 502.

[66] Personal knowledge.

[67] Sarat Ray – *Mundas and their Country*, pp. 447-48.

[68] G. Ramdas — The Godavar of Vizāgapattam : *Man in India.* Vol. XI, pp. 165-68.

This ceremony is prescribed only in one text, the *Sūtra* of Śāṅkhāyana. It is noteworthy for the fact that, despite the rigid ban generally placed on alcoholic liquor in the *Sūtra* literature, it is definitely prescribed here. We can only conclude that the dancers who were to be entertained with food and liquor were not women of the bride's caste, but low caste professional entertainers, for whom there was no taboo on alcoholic drinks. In the text there seems to be no suggestion of the bride and bridegroom or the families themselves partaking of *surā*. The professional entertainer is still much in demand at Indian wedding.

Arghya Reception

Some *Gṛhyasūtras* describe the *madhuparka* or *arghya* reception as a part of the marriage rite and others mention it independently. This is generally offered by way of honour to the distinguished guest. The *arghya* reception of the bridegroom is offered when he arrives at the bride's house. It should again be offered when the newly married couple have arrived at their own house.[71] The word

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[69] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.11.5.

[70] W. G. Archer : Notes on two Oraon Marriages : *Man in India*, Vol. XX, pp. 258-260.

[71] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.12.10.

madhuparka literally means "a ceremony in which honey is shed or poured". There are differences of opinion as regards the substances mixed in offering *madhuparka*. *Āpaśtamba Gṛhyasūtra*[72] prescribes a mixture of honey and curd or of clarified butter and curd. Hiraṇyakeśin[73] lays down a mixture of curds, honey, ghee, water and ground grain. According to Mānava[74] the Veda declares that the *madhuparka* must not be without flesh, and so it recommends that at the ceremony of the releasing of a cow to wander at will, the flesh of goat or ram may be offered. Śāṅkhāyana[75] also mentions that the *arghya* reception should always be offered with flesh, especially at sacrifices and weddings. The use of meat in the *madhuparka* was evidently not approved of in many Brahmanical circles even in early times, and has now long been given up.

THE MAIN MARRIAGE CEREMONY

After these preliminaries, there are certain essential ceremonies, which are common to all the *Gṛhyasūtras*. They are performed as follows :—

At the beginning of the ceremony the bride should be ceremonially given by her father to the bridegroom. This is called the *Kanyādāna*, (giving away the daughter). Then having placed a mill stone at the west of the the fire, the bridegroom should offer oblations while the girl touches his hand as a token of full partnership. Then he takes hold of her hand (*pāṇigrahaṇa*) with appropriate *mantras*. Then he leads her thrice round the fire, each time making her tread on the stone. After that they offer fried grains (*lājahoma*) to the fire. Then he causes her to take seven steps forward in a north-eastern direction with seven appropriate *mantras*. There is great divergence of opinion among *Sūtrakāras* as regards the order of the rituals. For example, the *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra*[76] describes going round the fire before *Saptapadī* (7 steps) while *Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtras*[77] describes *Saptapadī* before going round the fire. The *Gobhila, Khādira* and *Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtras*[78] describe *Pāṇigrahaṇa* after *Saptapadī*, while many other *Sūtrakāras* describe it before *Saptapadī*.[79]

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[72] *Āp. Gṛ.* V.13.10.

[73] *Hir. Gṛ.* I.12.10-12.

[74] *Mān. Gṛ.* I.9.22.

[75] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* II.15.

[76] *Āśv. Gṛ.* I.7.7.

[77] *Āp. Gṛ.* IV.16.

Kanyādāna

The actual marriage starts from the ceremony of *Kanyādāna*. This ceremony is described in detail in the *Mānava Gṛhyasūtra*.[80] The groom is led into the place where the *Sampradāna* is performed. Either her father or the brother is competent to give away the bride. To the west of the fire four seats are prepared. The bridegroom sits on the western side facing east and the *Sampradātā* (he who makes *Sampradāna*) sits on the southern side facing north. The giver should give away, if the bride is to be married according to the Brāhma rite, saying the words :—"I give" thrice, while the receiver repeats the words "I accept" thrice. This *Kanyādāna* is also mentioned in the *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra*.[81] Among other *Gṛhyasūtras*, Āśvalāyana[82] does not clearly describe the ceremony but uses the word *dadyāt* while defining the first four forms. It is very strange that this *Kanyādāna*, which is considered to be one of the essential ceremonies of the later period, is not mentioned by most of the *Gṛhyasūtras*. The Vedic references and those in the *Gṛhyasūtras* show that it was believed that the bridegroom received the bride as a gift from the gods and not from the father. The rite of *Sampradāna* evidently became an essential ceremony only in the later period; we may connect its introduction with the development of different forms of marriage in Hindu society, and with the deterioration of the position of women, who came to be looked on more as in the nature of property.

Vivāha Homa

The putting of wood on the fire is performed with appropriate ceremonies and *Ājyabhāga* oblations are offered to the fire.[83] Then the bridegroom leads his bride round the fire. After the circumambulation of the fire the bride and bridgeroom sit down to the west of the fire on a mat.[84] The bridegroom takes hold of the bride's hands while he offers the oblations,[85] with the following verses :

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[78] *Gobh.* II.2.16: *Khād. Gṛ.* I.3.31; *Baudh. Gṛ.* I.4.10.

[79] For a comparative table of the rite according to different *Sūtras*, see the table at the end of the book.

[80] *Mān. Gṛ.* I.8.6-8. [81] *Pār. Gṛ.* I.4. [82] *Āśv. Gṛ.* I.6.

सोमाय जनिविदे स्वाहा ।। १ ।।
गंधर्वाय जनिविदे स्वाहा ।। २ ।।
आग्नये जनिविदे स्वाहा ।। ३ ।।
कन्यला पितृभ्यो यति पतिलोकमव दीक्षामदास्थ स्वाहा ।। ४ ।।
प्रतो मुञ्चाति नामुतः सुवद्धाममुतस्करं ।
यथेयमिन्द्र मीढ्वः सुपुत्रा सुभगसाति ।। ५ ।।

इमां त्वमिन्द्र मीढ्वः सुपुत्रां सुभगां कृणु
दशास्यांम् पुत्रानाधेहि पतिमेकादशं कृधि ।। ६ ।।
अग्निरैतु प्रथमो देवतानां
सोऽस्यै प्रजां मुञ्चतु मृत्युपाशात् ।
तदयं राजा वरुणोऽनु मन्यतां
यथेयं स्त्रि पौत्रमघं न रोधात् ।। ७ ।।

इमामग्निस्त्रायताम् गार्हपत्यः
प्रजामस्यै नयतु दीर्घमायुः ।
अशून्यपस्था जीवतमस्तु माता
पौत्रमानन्दमभिप्रवुध्यता इयम् ।। ८ ।।
मा ते गृहे निशि घोष उत्थाद्
अन्यत्र त्वद्रुदत्यः संविशन्तु ।
मा त्वम् विकेश्यूरु आ वधिष्ठा
जीवपत्नी पतिलोके वी राज
पश्यन्ती प्रजां सुमनस्यमानां ।। ९ ।।

द्यौस्ते पृष्ठं रक्षतु वायुरूरु
अश्विनौ च स्तनं ध्यामन्तं सविताभिरक्षतु ।
आ वाससः परिधानाद् बृहस्पतिर्
विश्वे देवा अभिरक्षन्तु पश्चात् ।। १० ।।

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[83] *Āp. Gṛ.* II.IV.10.
[84] *Āp. Gṛ.* II.IV.9.
[85] *Āp. Gṛ.* II.5.2; *Bhār. Gṛ.* I.13.

अप्रजस्तां पौत्रमृत्युम् पाप्मानमुतवाघं
शीर्ष्णः स्रजमिवोन्मुच्य
द्विषद्भ्यः प्रति मुञ्चामि पाशं ।। ११ ।।

इमं मे वरुण श्रुधि हवमद्या च मृदय
त्वामवस्यराचके ।। १२ ।।

तत्त्वा यामि ब्रह्मणा वन्दमान स्तदा शास्ते यजमानो हविर्भिः
अहेडमानो वरुणेहवोध्युरु शंसमान आयुः प्रमोषीः ।। १३ ।।
त्वंमनोऽग्ने वरुणस्य विद्वान् देवस्य हेडोऽव यास्सीष्ठाः
यजिष्ठो वह्नितमः शोशुचानो विश्वा द्वेशांसि प्रमुमुग्ध्यस्मत् ।। १४ ।।
सत्वंन्नो अग्नेऽवमो भवोति नेदिष्ठो अस्या उशसो व्युष्टौ
अव यक्षवा नो वरुणं रराणो
वीही मृडिकम् सुहवो न एधि ।। १५ ।।
त्वमग्ने अयास्य अयास्यअयासन्मनन्साहि ताः ।। १६ ।।
अयासन्हव्यमूहिसेऽया नो धेहि भेषजम् ।

1 To Soma, finder of woman *svāhā.*
2 To Gandharva, the finder of woman *svāhā.*
3 To Agni, the finder of woman *svāhā.*
4 The virgin who from her father's house steps into the husband's world has completed the virgin initiation.
5 He releases you from here, but not from there. He places you here firmly. O generous Indra, may she have excellent sons and be blessed with fortune.
6 O Indra, make this wife mother of good sons and fortunate. Give her ten sons, and make her husband the eleventh.
7 May Agni come as the first of the gods, may he liberate her children from the fetters of death and may he, King Varuṇa, grant that, this woman should not weep over a guilt connected with her son.
8 May Agni Gārhapatya (the house fire) protect her. May he grant her children and long life. May not her womb be empty; may she be the mother of living children. May she take delight in her children.
9 May there never be wailing at night in your house, may the (hired) female mourners go elsewhere. May you never beat your breast with loosened hair. No, as the

wife of a living husband, radiate light at the house of the husband, looking upon the happy crowd of children.

10 May Dyaus protect your back, Vāyu your thigh, and the Aśvins your breasts, may Savitṛ protect your suckling. Until the putting on the garment, may Bṛhaspati protect you, afterwards all the gods.

11 Childlessness, death of children, misfortune or blame, I take away from you, just as the garland is removed from the head, and attach them as chains to the enemy.

12 O hear my prayer, O Varuṇa be gracious to-day, intreating your help I long for you.

13 Thereupon I approach you, honouring you with prayer. This is what the sacrificer desires through his offerings. Do not be angry with us. O Varuṇa, who are praised (known) far and wide. Do not take our life.

14 O Agni, you have cleverly turned away the scorn of the god Varuṇa. You, who sacrifice best, you, who bring the gods near best, shining brightly, remove from us all hostile acts.

15 When the morning Sun rises may you, O Agni, you, who are lowest be nearest to us as a helper. Reconcile us with Varuṇa through sacrifice; come, giving us your grace respond readily to our call.

16 You Agni are tireless and you are kind as you are tireless. Tirelessly, conduct the sacrificial food. Tirelessly, give us medicine.

This *Vivāha homa* is described in different ways in *Gṛhyasūtras.* Hiraṇyakeśin[86] prescribes that only the verses 8 to 16 should be uttered on this occasion. Pāraskara[87] mentions the *homa* in the following way. It is to be performed after the bridegroom has led his bride round the fire. He sits to the west of the fire and offers oblations while the bride touches him. As well as *ājya* and *Mahāvyāhṛti*. which are mentioned in all the *Gṛhyasūtras*,[88] he also makes *Gaya* and *Abhyātāna* oblations, which are intended to procure royal power and victory.

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[86] *Hir. Gṛ.* I.19.7.

[87] *Pār. Gṛ.* I.5.

[88] See below pp. ...

The bridegroom then offers other oblations with the following *mantras.*

अग्निरेतु प्रथमो देवताभ्यः सोस्ये प्रजां मुञ्चतु मृत्युपाशात् ।
तदयं राजा वरुणोनु मन्यतां यथेयं स्त्रीपौत्रमेघं न रोदात्त स्वाहा । (M. B. I·10)
इमा मग्निस्त्रायतां गार्हपत्यः प्रजामस्यै जरदष्टिम् कृणोतु ।
अशून्योपस्था जीवता मस्तु माता पौत्रमानन्दमभिविबुध्यता मिय स्वाहा
(M. B. I. I·11)

"May Agni come here, the first of gods. May he release the offspring of the wife from the fetters of death. That may this king Varuṇa grant, that this wife may not weep over distress through her sons, *svāhā.*"

"May Gārhapatya Agni protect this woman. May he lead her offspring to old age. With fertile womb may she be the mother of living children. May she experience delight in her sons, *svāhā.*"

Khādira[89] also mentions the similar *mantras* at this oblation. After the *mantra* is recited, the rite of *Agni-pariṇaya* follows; here the bridegroom leads his bride three times round the fire, keeping the right side towards it. At the end of each round the rite of *stepping upon the stone* is performed by her with his help.

Pāṇigrahaṇa

Pāṇigrahaṇa is one of the essential ceremonies constituting the marriage and it is looked on as so important that the term *Pāṇigrahaṇa* is often used synonymously with *Vivāha* or another word explicitly meaning marriage. The seizing of the hand can be done in one of the two ways, according to the *Gṛhyasūtras.* The bridegroom can take hold of the fingers of the bride's right hand only without the thumb, if he wishes for sons only. If he wishes to procreate children of both sexes he should take hold of her hand and the little hair on the back.[90]

Lājahoma

After this the bridegroom twice pours sacrificial ghee on the roasted grain held in her hands; this she sacrifices in the fire while she utters the following verse :—

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[89] *Khād. Gr.* I.3.11.

[90] *Āp. Gr.* II.4.12-14.

इयं नायुपब्रुते जल्पान्यावपन्तिका
दीर्घायुरस्तु मे पतिर्जीवातु शरदश्शतम् । (M. I. 5·2)

"This woman, strewing grains prays: may my husband have a long life; may he live for a hundred autumns."

The ceremonies of circumambulation of the fire and treading on the stone follow twice more after this.

According to Bhāradvāja[91] the sacrifice precedes *Pāṇigrahaṇa*. After the bride has bathed and is dressed, the sacrificial fire, taken from the house of the relations of the bride or the bridegroom (probably the latter) is placed before them. Then the bridegroom puts butter into the fire, with the verses :—

"Soma, the finder of woman, *svāhā* etc."[92]

Then follows the seizing of the hand, the stepping on the stone, the circumambulation round the fire and the *lājahoma*.

According to Hiraṇyakeśin[93] the *Vivāha homa* as well as the stepping on the stone precede the grasping of the hand and the seven steps. The bridegroom makes the bride sit down, pours into her joined hands sacrificial ghee, and strews roasted grain upon it.[94] After she has sacrificed these grains into the fire he makes her get up and walk round the fire. Then he strews roasted grain on the fire, they circumambulate a second time, and again he strews roasted grain. After having circumambulated for the third time he makes an offering to Agni Svistakṛt.[95]

According to Pāraskara[96] after she is led round the fire by the groom and after the sacrifices with the *Mahāvyāhṛtis* and other formulas, the bride, standing, sacrifices with the fried grain mixed with *śamī* leaves, which her brother pours out into her joined palms.

According to Gobhila[97] and Khādira[98] after the sacrifice with *Mahāvyāhṛtis*[99] the bridegroom makes the bride tread on the stone. Then her brother, fills her joined palms with fried grain, which she sacrifices in the fire after ghee has been spread under and poured over them.

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[91] *Bhār. Gṛ.* I.13.

[92] *M.I.* 1-16.

[93] *Hir. Gṛ.* I.19.7-9.

[94] *Hir. Gṛ.* I.20.3-7.

[95] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.13.1-4; *Pār. Gṛ.* II.7.10, 7.1-6; *Gobh. Gṛ.* II.1.24, 2, 10; *Kauś.* 76.4, 5.

[96] *Pār. Gṛ.* I.5.

[97] *Gobh. Gṛ.* II.1.25-26.

[98] *Khād. Gṛ.* I.3.11-13; I.3.16.

After this sacrifice the husband leads her round the fire so that their right sides are turned towards it, or the Brāhmaṇa, versed in the *mantras*, does the same.

All the ceremonies beginning with the treading on the stone are thrice repeated in the same way.

The order of the ceremonies according to *Mānava Gṛhyasūtra*[100] is somewhat different. The bridegroom stirs up the fire and offers oblations to the current *nakṣatra* and its deity, to the *tithi* and the deity of the *tithi*, to the season and the deity of the season. Thereupon he sacrifices eight gifts of ghee into the fire.

The *Pāṇigrahaṇa*, which takes place after the sacrifice, is followed by the *Aśmārohana*, or stepping on the stone. Here both the groom and bride are made to step on the stone with their right foot, while according to other *Gṛhyasūtras* the bride only steps upon it. The "stepping of the stone" is done twice. Four times they are led round the fire; at each circle the Brāhmaṇa repeats the following *Brahma Japa*: "Be united, be harmonious, being friendly to each other, radiant with kind thoughts, clothing yourself in food and strength".[101]

In *Mānava Gṛhyasūtra* the *Lājahoma* follows after this. After having strewn rice and barley and having sprinkled water for Aryaman, Pūṣan, Agni and Varuṇa, we are told that "he roasts the grain and gives it to the mother (of the bride) or to a woman who is related to her[102] and who has her husband living". It is she who sacrifices it in the fire. It seems hardly likely that the ceremony was interrupted while the bridegroom roasted the grain to be used for sacrifice, and thus it seems probable that this operation was performed by the officiating priest, while the *Lājahoma* was being offered by the groom.

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[99] See below p. ...

[100] *Mān. Gṛ.* I.10.

[101] संमितं संङ्कपेथाम् इति पर्याये पर्याये ब्रह्मा ब्रह्म जपं जपेत् *Mān. Gṛ.* I.11.

[102] *Sajātā* according to Winternitz means a woman, who has living children. Winternitz, *D.K.A.W.*, Vol. XL, p. 60.

According to *Śaṅkhāyana*[103] and *Āśvalāyana*[104] *Gṛhyasūtras* the bride offers the sacrifices of fried grain, which is poured into her hands by her brother, to the gods, Aryaman, Varuṇa, and Pūṣan, with Agni as the intercessor on her behalf.

Saptapadī

Saptapadī, or taking the seven steps together, is another essential ceremony. It occurs in different sequence according to different *Gṛhyasūtras*. According to Śāṅkhāyana,[105] after the sacrifice with fried grain, the *Ācārya* makes the couple take seven steps forward in a north-eastern direction. According to Āpastamba,[106] this ceremony takes place after the *Pāṇigrahaṇa* but before the sacrifices to the fire, the stepping on the stone, and the *Lājahoma*. After the *Pāṅigrahaṇa* the groom makes his bride take seven steps with the following verses[107] :—

एकमिषे विष्णुस्त्वान्वेतु ।
द्वे ऊर्जे विष्णुस्त्वान्वेतु ।
त्रीणि व्रताय विष्णुस्त्वान्वेतु ।
चत्वारि मायोभवाय विष्णुस्त्वान्वेतु ।
पञ्च पशुभ्यो विष्णुस्त्वान्वेतु ।
षडृतुभ्यो विष्णुस्त्वान्वेतु ।
सप्त सप्तभ्यो होत्राम्यो विष्णुस्त्वान्वेतु ।

“One for sap, may Viṣhṇu speed you
two for strength, may Viṣṇu speed you
three for duty, may Viṣṇu speed you
four for welfare, may Viṣṇu speed you
five for animals, may Viṣṇu speed you
six for seasons, may Viṣṇu speed you
seven for seven *hotras*, may Viṣṇu speed you

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[103] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.13.15-17.

[104] *Āśv. Gṛ.* I.7.8-16.

[105] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.14.5.

[106] *Āp. Gṛ.* II.4.16 Seq.

[107] *M.I.* 3.7-13.

Baudhāyaṇa, Bharadvāja and Hiraṇyakeśin[108] give the same text, but instead of 'six for seasons' they have six for prosperity of wealth'. Baudhāyaṇa[109] differs considerably from the other *Gṛhyasūtras* when he mentions the rite of seven steps be carried out at the beginning of the wedding and before the grasping of the hand. After the seventh step the bridegroom recites the following verse:[110]

सखा सप्तपदा भव सखायौ सप्तपदा बभूव ।
सख्यं ते गमेयं सख्यात्ते मा योषांसख्यान्मे मा योष्ठाः ।।
समयाव सं कल्पावहै संप्रियौ रोचिष्णू सुमनस्यमानौ ।।
इषमूर्जमभिसंवसानौ ।।
सं नौ मनांसि सं व्रता समु चित्तान्याकरम् ।
सा त्वमस्यमुहममूहमस्मि सा त्वं द्यौरहं पृथिवी त्वं ।
रेतोऽहं रेतोभृत्त्वं ।
मनोऽहमस्मि वाक्त्वं ।
सामाहमस्मिरुक्त्वं ।
सा मामनुव्रता भव ।
पुंसे पुत्राय वेत्तवै ।
श्रियै पुत्राय वेत्तवा एहि सूनृते ।

"Be a friend with the seven steps; friends we were after the seven steps. May I attain to your friendship. May I not be separated from your friendship. May you not be separated from my friendship. May we be united. May we live harmoniously together for strength and energy; may I join together our thoughts. This am I, that are you. That am I, this are you. Heaven I, earth you I the seed, container you. Sāmana am I, Ṛk you. So be devoted to me, so that you may have a male child, so that you may have handsome sons, O happy one.

Among all these ceremonies the offerings are primarily religious acts, essential to win the favour of the gods. The *Saptapadī* is symbolic of a solemn promise. As the couple walk together seven steps, they make several promises and bind themselves to each other in friendship and understanding. At every step the gods are invoked to strengthen the union.

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[108] *Baudh. Gṛ.* I.1; *Bhār. Gṛ.* I.16; *Hir. Gṛ.* I.21.

[109] *Baudh.*. *Gṛ.* I.1.

[110] *M.I.* 3.14.

These essential ceremonies of the *Gṛhyasūtras* are common to many Indo-European races. The custom of circumambulation round the fire was prevalent in ancient Rome. After the ceremony of *dexterum iunctio* a sacrifice was made, and the bride and bridegroom walked round the sacrificial altar, likewise from left to right.[111] In many parts of Germany[112] the bride is led three times round the fire by the groom or his mother.[113] The circumambulation always takes place round the hearth. Among some of the southern Slavs[114] the bride is led three times round the church before she is allowed to enter it. In Greece the bride and bridegroom are led three times round the altar. Winternitz[115] suggests that the circumambulation of the church is the survival of the old custom of leading the wife round the fire, and the great antiquity of this rite and its prevalence among all the Indo-European races seem to support his theory. Apart from the purifying nature of the place or object round which the circumambulation is performed it may also have been performed as a safeguard against evil influences, and it evidently had much magical significance.

The *Saptapadī* (seven steps) is one of the essential parts of the Hindu marriage ceremony even today. No marriage is complete without it. In Bengal it takes place before the sacrificial fire. Seven rings are drawn with rice paste on the floor. The bride is placed in front of the bridegroom and the bridegroom touches her right foot, leading her from one ring to another, till the seventh ring is reached; at each step *mantras* are uttered.

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[111] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, p. 512.

[112] In this and following citations we employ the present tense, basing our statements on Westermarck & Winternitz etc. It is probable however that many of the customs described by these authorities are now extinct or practically so.

[113] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, p. 513.

[114] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, p. 514.

[115] Winternitz, *D.K.A.W.*, Vol. XL, p. 62.

These seven circles are not mentioned by the *Gṛhyasūtras,* but according to Kauśika[116] seven lines are marked on which the steps are to be taken. Colebrooke[117] connects this ceremony with the fire ordeal,[118] where seven leaves of the *Aśvattha* tree are tied to the hands of the accused and he is made to hold a red-hot iron ball. But the *mantras* connected with the seven steps show that this ceremony is intended to unite the couple in friendship and indicate their eternal bond and the union of hearts. There seems no connection between the two rites but the number seven.

So we find that throughout the whole period, the basic Vedic ideology has been maintained in the Hindu marriage rituals, and nearly all the essential ceremonies can be traced back to the Indo-European period.

CEREMONIES PERFORMED AFTER THE MAIN RITES

The Weeping of the Bride

After the marriage, at the time of the departure of the bride from her father's home even her natural tears have been raised to the status of a ritual. Āśvalāyana[119] and Śāṅkhāyana[120] mention that the following verse is uttered by the groom when the bride begins to weep at the time of her departure. Āpastamba[121] states that the verse is to be uttered if the wife or her relatives weep during the marriage ceremony.

जीवं रुदन्ति वि मयन्ते अध्वरे दीर्घामनु प्रसितिं दीधियुर्नरः ।
वामं पितृभ्यो य इदं समेरिरे मयः पतिभ्यो जनयः परिष्वजे ॥ (ऋ. १०.८५.४०)

"The husbands who weep for the life (of their wives), make them sit down at the sacrifice, hold in a long embrace, (and) send the *pitṛs* this desirable offspring, upon these husbands the wives (bestow) happiness in order to be embraced".

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[116] *Kauś.* 76.6.

[117] Colebrooke, *M.E.* 2nd ed., Vol. I, p. 21.

[118] *Yājñ.* II.106, *Viṣṇu* XI.2.

[119] *Āśv. Gṛ.* I.8.4.

[120] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.15.2.

[121] *Āp. Gṛ.* II.IV.6.

Āśvalāyana and Śāṅkhayana apparently look on the bride's tears as part of the ritual, and no doubt when the above *mantra* was uttered she pretended to weep, even if tears did not come spontaneously. Āpastamba, on the other hand, evidently envisages natural tears, not necessarily part of the ceremony.

Similar ceremonies are found elsewhere. Among the Greeks, the bride at the time of her departure bursts into lamentations and struggles against the procession. When the leader says "leave her alone because she weeps", her conventional answer is "take me away from here, but let me weep".[122]

In the Karnal district (the Punjab) a similar ceremony is performed. As the bridal procession leaves, the girl starts crying bitterly and bewails some near relative who has recently died.[123]

Winternitz[124] thinks that this obligatory weeping of the bride is a survival of rape. But it is also possible that the very natural act of weeping of the bride at the time of her departure from her father's home has been raised into a ritual. The rite is particularly emphasised by all the *Gṛhyasūtras*. From the point of view of the *Gṛhyasūtras* the whole life of the Aryan was ritualistic in character. So it is quite natural that the simple act of weeping should be raised to a ritual to be performed with all the formalities.

To the Husband's Home

On their way to the husband's home, if they pass cross-roads, posts (sthānu)[125] or bathing places, the bridegroom utters the following verse :—

"Produce joyfully in the husband's home wealth and ten heroic sons. Cause the drinks to be agreeable, O Lord of

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[122] Rossbach, *Untersuchungen uber die rorische Ehe*. p. 329 referred to in Winternitz, *D.K.A.W.*, Vol. XL, p. 42.

[123] *Punjab Gazetteer*, Karnal Dist., Lahore, 1885, pp. 77, 78.

[124] Winternitz, *D.K.A.W.*, Vol. XL, pp. 42-43.

[125] It seems hardly likely that all kinds of post were looked on as so inauspicious as to necessitate the utterance of a special *mantra*. Possibly the word *sthānu* here refers to the trunk of a dead tree.

splendour. Drive away the post that is standing by the way, the scoundrel.[126]
Rudra is invoked if one comes to a cross-road. Cross-roads are considered only second to temples in sanctity by Gautama[127] and Baudhāyana;[128] they are reverenced by turning the right side towards them. The season for this superstition in Europe seems to be that in the old days the dead were buried at the cross-roads and therefore these places were looked upon as ghostly, as we find among the Slavonic peoples, whose burial grounds were traditionally sited near cross-roads.[129]

When the couple cross a river by a boat the groom recites the following verse:—

अयं नो मह्याः पारं स्वस्ति नेषद्वनस्पतिः ।
सीरा नः स्सुतरा भव दीर्घायुत्वाय वर्चसे ॥ (M. I. 6·13)

"May this tree (perhaps wooden boat) take us to the bank of the river and to our welfare. May you be a river easily crossed for a long life and for splendour."

The wife should not look at the crew when she is crossing. When they have crossed, the bridegroom murmurs the following verse:—

अस्य पारे निर्ऋथस्य जीवा ज्योतिरशीमहि ।
मह्याइन्द्रस्वस्तये ॥ (M. I. 6·14)

"On the other side of this destroyer, may we arrive at the light, alive to our welfare, O Indra".

The crossing of rivers is considered to be dangerous in many other countries. In Scandinavia great danger from evil influences threatens the bride if she has to cross a river on her way home from church.[130] The reason for the wife's avoiding to look at the crew while crossing, may also be due to the belief in *nazar*, which may obstruct the journey. The glance of the bride is considered to be injurious to others in other places too. The Tsui and Ait Nder of Morocco maintained that if a bride looked at anyone on her way to the bridegroom's home, there would be fighting and manslaughter at the wedding feast that same day.[131]

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[126] *Āp. Gṛ.* II.5.25. cf. *A.V.* XIV.2.6.
[127] *Gaut. Dh.* XXIII.17.
[128] *Baudh. Dh.* IV.7.7.
[129] Winternitz, *D.K.A.W.*, Vol. XL, p. 68.
[130] *Düringsfeld, Hochzeitbuch* 1, referred to in Winternitz, *D.K.A.W.*, Vol. XL, p. 69.

If something breaks in the carriage the bridegroom performs a burnt sacrifice.[132] They enter the village at sunset or at the command of the Brāhmaṇa (probably the *purohita*). Āpastamba[133] mentions that if any article which they are carrying or their chariot is damaged, sacrifices are to be performed. The common belief in Germany, and indeed probably throughout Europe and America, is that the marriage will be unhappy if an accident happens on the wedding day or on the day near the wedding day.[134]

According to *Gobhila*,[135] *Khādira*[136] and *Āśvalāyana*[137] *Gṛhyasūtras* the bride should spend that day and night in the house of a Brāhmaṇa, where certain ceremonies are to be performed. According to Khādira and Āśvalāyana only the ceremony of looking at the Pole Star is performed there. But according to Gobhila other ceremonies such as 'sitting on the bull's hide' and 'eating together' are to be performed. While according to other *Gṛhyasūtras* the later ceremonies are to be performed at the house of the bridegroom after their arrival.

Looking at the Pole-Star

According to Khādira and Āśvalāyana the ceremony of looking at the Pole-Star is performed at the house of the Brāhmaṇa where they break their journey. The bridegroom shows her the Pole-Star and the star Arundhatī,[138] which are considered to be the symbols of firmness. Then she breaks her silence by respectfully calling her *guru* by his *gotra* name. According to one commentator 'her *guru*' means her husband; but it may also mean the Brāhmaṇa in whose house they have arrived. From this time, they are to avoid eating saline or pungent food and sleep on the ground, without having conjugal intercourse for three nights. Then an *arghya*[139] reception is offered to the young husband.

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[131] Westermarck, *R.B.M.*, Vol. I, p. 420.

[132] Āp. Gṛ. II.VI.4.

[133] *Āp. Gṛ.* II.VI.4.

[134] Winternitz, *D.K.A.W.*, Vol. XL, p. 10.

[135] *Gobh. Gṛ.* II.3.

[136] *Khād. Gṛ.* I.4.

[137] *Āśv. Gṛ.* I.7.21.

According to some authorities this *arghya* reception is offered when the bridegroom and his companions arrive at the house of the bride's father. There is one interesting point. The bride is taken so far from her native village and the journey lasts so long, that it has to be broken in a Brāhmaṇa's house on the way. These facts indicate that the marriage was generally exogamous as may be gathered from many other sources, and that normally the couple belonged to different villages, often a considerable distance apart. Such is still usually the case at the present time.

The bride at the New Home

According to Śāṅkhāyana,[140] the *arghya* reception, with the killing of a cow, is offered on two different occasions, first, when the groom arrives in the house of the bride's father before the wedding; second, when the newly married couple arrives at his father's house. Here the *arghya* is offered by the *ācārya.*

Crossing the Threshold

The bride should not stand on the threshold while entering the house of her husband. *Hiraṇyakeśin Gṛhyasūtra*[141] mentions that she should cross the threshold with the help of the groomsmen, and the priest should remind them that the threshold was not to be touched by her foot. In Rome the bride was lifted across the threshold to avoid a bad omen of touching the threshold with her foot.[142] In French Switzerland the young husband embraced his bride,

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[138] Arundhatī is the morning star, personified as the wife of Vaśiṣṭha or of the seven Ṛṣis; also one of the Pleiades : Vaśiṣṭha is one of the seven Ṛṣis or stars in the Great Bear.

[139] See above pp. 47-48.

[140] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.12.10.

[141] *Hir. Gṛ.* I.7.22.6.

[142] Hastings, E.R.E. Vol. VIII, p. 465.

lifted her up lightly, and so let her jump across the threshold.[143] According to German popular belief the threshold is a place of magic. The custom of burying the dead under the threshold is found among many primitive races, so it is quite clear that the purpose of avoiding the threshold could only be to avoid the fear (of the dead?) that goes with it. The custom of the groom carrying his bride over the threshold is widely observed in contemporary England.

On the Red Bull's Hide

After arriving at the husband's home, and having placed the nuptial fire in the house, the bridegroom makes his bride sit on a bull's hide and performs sacrifices.[144] According to Gobhila, Khādira and Āśvalāyana[145] the bride should spend that night in the house of a Brāhmaṇa where wood is put into the nuptial fire and a red bull's hide is spread out with the neck side on the east. The bride is made to sit down on the hide and keep silent. According to Mānava[146] the bride sits down on a red oxhide immediately after the seven steps, in the course of the central ceremony at her old home. As has been shown in the previous chapter, this rite seems to be connected with fertility.[147]

A Boy in the Bride's Lap

After making the wife sit down on a red oxhide a little boy is placed in her lap,[148] and is given fruit. The custom of placing a male child in the lap of the bride so that she may give birth to a son is widely spread among many Indo-European peoples. With the Yugoslavs the general custom is to put the boy into the lap of the bride; she then hugs him to her heart and gives him presents.[149] The desire for male children occurs again and again in the Vedic wedding texts. In Yugoslavian proverbs it is repeatedly emphasized that the son is the foundation of the house, the daughter on the other hand is the evening meal of a stranger. The custom is prevalent in the Punjab. The bridegroom's elder brother's wife sits down, opens her legs, and takes the bridegroom between her thighs. The bride similarly sits between the bridegroom's thighs and takes a little boy into her lap.[150]

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[143] Winernitz, *D.K.A.W.*, Vol. XL, p. 72.

[144] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.16.

[145] *Gobh. Gṛ.* II.3; *Khād. Gṛ.* I.4; *Āśv. Gṛ.* I.7.21.

[146] *Mān. Gṛ.* I.11.

[147] See above pp. 26-27.

[148] *Āp. Gṛ.* I.6.11; *Gobh. Gṛ.* II.4, 7-10; *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.16.8-11.

[149] Krauss, *Sitte and Brauch der Südslaven*, 394, 428, 430, 431 referred to in Winternitz, *D.K.A.W.*, Vol. XL, p. 79.

Cohabitation

The couple is to refrain from conjugal intercourse for a period of three nights after the marriage, preserving chastity, sleeping on the ground, eating no saline or pungent food, and drinking milk only.[151] By the expression 'preserving chastity', according to a commentator, not only is cohabitation prohibited but everything relating to it, such as thinking of cohabitation, joking, talking secretly etc.[152] *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra*[153] says that they should practise continence for three or twelve nights or even for one year, because after one year's chastity a *Ṛṣi* will be born to them. Pāraskara [154] differs slightly from Āśvalāyana on the point. He says that for three nights they should not eat anything strongly spiced or salty and sleep on the floor, but they should refrain from conjugal intercourse for one year, or twelve nights, or at least for three nights. According to Baudhāyana,[155] continence is to be practised for three nights, twelve nights, four months, six months or for one year, according to whether they wish to beget *Śrotriya* (one learned in Vedas), an *Anucāna* (knower of of the Veda), a still higher Brāhmaṇa (*Bhṛuṇa*), a *Ṛṣi* or even a *Deva*. The commentary reads as follows:— "whoever is begotten by a Brāhmaṇa or Brāmaṇī is called a child until he is introduced to a teacher. As soon as he has been introduced, has taken a vow and has studied the

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[150] *Punjab Gazetteer*, Karnal dist., p. 77.
[151] *Āp. Gṛ*. III. VII. 8; *Śāṅkh. Gṛ*. I.17.5 ff. *Gobh. Gṛ*. II.3.15.
[152] Sudarśanārcarya's commentary on *Āp. Gṛ*.
[153] *Āśv. Gṛ*. I.8.10-11.
[154] *Pār. Gṛ*. I.8.21.
[155] *Baudh. Gṛ*. I.11.

Vedas somewhat, he is called *Brāhmaṇa*. After having studied a *śākhā* he is called a *Śrotriya*, he who has also studied *Aṅgas* is called *Anucāna;* he who has studied the *Kalpas* is called *Ṛṣikalpa;* he who has studied the *Sūtras* and *Pravacans* is called *Bhrūṇa*. He who has studied the four Vedas is called a *Ṛṣi* and he who goes on studying is called a *Deva*. Thus if they wish to beget a *Śrotriya* they perform all the ceremonies upto the worship of Arundhatī, and for three nights they should not eat anything strongly spiced or salty, should sleep on the floor, and preserve continence. They wear new clothes and decorate themselves in the morning and evening. On the fourth night a burnt offering of food is made as oblation. But if they wish to beget an *Anucāna* they should observe that vow for twelve nights. At the end of this follows the burnt oblations and cohabitation. If they wish to beget a *Bhrūna* he should observe the vow for four months. If they wish to beget a *Ṛṣi* they observe the vow for six months. If the wish is to beget a *Deva* they should observe the vow for a whole year.

Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasūtra*[156] ordains that the couple are to sleep on the floor for three nights, avoiding spices and salt and wearing new clothes. Then throughout seven days they bathe with accompaniment of music, decorate themselves, eat together and honour their guests.

The same kind of continence, which is prescribed after the wedding ceremony, is also observed at other times according to *Gṛhyasūtras*. After a funeral the relations are not to eat anything spiced or salty and to sleep on the ground and observe continence.[157] The practice of continence may have been followed for fear of the evil spirits who, in the act of copulation, might slip into the woman and endanger the offspring.

According to Āpastamba[158] either a staff anointed with perfume is wrapped round with a garment, or a thread is placed between the couple on their bed. According to Hardatta the staff is taken from a lactiferous tree and its purpose is to avoid contact. Sudrsanācārya thinks that the staff represents the Gandharva Viśvāvasu and for this reason it is of *Udumbara, Āśvattha* or *Plākṣa* tree, since these are thought to be the dwelling of the Gandharva and Apsarās. According to Śāṅkhāyana, when the three nights have elapsed the groom makes an offering of cooked food with prayers to Agni, Vāyu, Sūrya, Aryaman, Varuṇa, Pūṣan, Prajāpati and Agni Svistakṛt.[159] This rule is called *Cathurthīkarma* because it is performed on the fourth day after the wedding.

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[156] *Kām.* III.1.

[157] *Manu.* V. 73.

[158] *Āp. Gr.* III.8.9.

Gobhila[160] says that the bridegroom should make the *ājya* oblation to Agni, Vāyu, Candra and Sūrya, and the fifth oblation with the names of the four gods together. The remnant of each oblation should be poured out into a water pot. The wife's body, including her hair and nails, is besmeared with *ājya* and she is washed. Cohabitation follows after three nights, or after her three monthly illness "according to some".

According to Baudhāyana,[161] after the sacrifices are over he pours the remainder on her head, after having placed a piece of gold underneath. Then he leads her round the fire with her right side towards it, after which he leads her to the nuptial chamber.

The frequent use of gold seems to be of some magical effect. The gold is placed on the bride's head before putting the remnants of the oblations. These may be to protect her from the evil eye. In certain parts of Greece, mothers frequently decorate their infants' cap with coins or other bright ornaments, in order to divert attention from the child to these objects.[162]

Ṛtugamana is the technical expression for cohabitation. Āpastamba[163] thinks that union on each following night with an even number from the fourth after the beginning of the wife's monthly illness to the sixteenth, brings better and better offspring.

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[159] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.18.19.
[160] *Gobh. Gṛ.* II.5.
[161] *Baudh. Gṛ.* I.1.
[162] H. Murray Aynsley, *S.W.E.*, p. 144.
[163] *Āp. Gṛ.* III. IX. 1.

Just as the Indians, so the Greeks and Roman considered the time after menstruation to be particularly favourable for the production of an offspring.[164]

The Common Meal

At the end of the *Caturthīkarma*, which took place at the house of the bridegroom, the husband made the wife eat a meal of cooked food.[165] Later this was turned into a conjugal feast and it is performed now after the second day of marriage. On the *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra*, Gadādhara observes, "here the husband dines with the wife according to custom." Eating with the wife is normally prohibited in the Hindu *Dharmaśāstra*,[166] but this is an exceptional case entailing no sin. The ceremony symbolises the union of the persons of both the husband and the wife, and is accompanied by a feast for relatives of both parties.

The wedding feast does not merely serve the object of making the marriage public, but it brings together the two families and makes them more friendly to each other; its social importance is particularly great.

The common meal is an extremely widespread marriage custom. It has been found among some American tribes. Among the Navaho, the marriage ceremony merely consisted in eating maize pudding from the same plate, and among the Pawnee the bride took a dish containing food, which she placed before the bridegroom; they both ate and then she became his wife. In Morocco it is a very common custom for the pair to partake of some food together before they have intercourse. Sometimes the bridegroom eats first and then each puts some food into the other's mouth.[167] In ancient Rome[168] the couple partook of a cake. The cake made of the old Italian grain called *far*, from which the patrician marriage in ancient Rome received its name, *confarreatio*, was offered to Jupiter Farreus and partaken of by bride and bridegroom in the presence of witnesses.

[164] Winternitz, *D.K.A.W.*, Vol. XL, p. 95.

[165] *Pār. Gṛ.* I.11.5.

[166] *Manu* IV.43; *Vaś. Dh.* XII.31.

[167] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, p. 448.

[168] Hastings, *E.R.E.*, Vol. VIII, p. 463.

At the present day the custom of eating together usually from the same plate or dish, or of the same loaf of bread, or with the same spoon at the betrothal or, more often, at the wedding, is found in many parts of Europe. Yet in spite of its occurrence among so many people of Indo-European race we cannot be certain that it was a primitive Indo-European custom. As Winternitz points out, it is possible that it originated among different branches independently. It would be different, he says, if we found exactly the same kind of dish - say, the wedding cake - used among all the Indo-European peoples, or if the ceremony had its fixed place in the marriage ritual, like the joining of hands, and some other customs.[169]

LOCAL CUSTOMS AND WOMANLY RITES.

Our detailed analysis of the marriage rituals makes it clear that the basic ceremony in the *Gṛhyasūtras* is similar to that of the *Ṛg-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda*. Some minor non-Vedic rituals may have been integrated with the Vedic marriage rites, but they do not seem to have affected its main scheme. Some of these minor rituals were no doubt incorporated in the Vedic scheme of things owing to the persistence of older customs and presumably also of rites practised by women, who usually cling more steadfastly than men to traditional customs of old. The *Pāraskara*[170] and *Āśvalāyana*[171] *Gṛhyasūtras* expressly say that the customs of the village (*grāmavacanam*) are to be observed at the wedding. Similar injunctions are found in *Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra*,[172] where it is said that one should learn from women the customs which are to be observed. Gadādhara explains *grāmavacana* as follows :—"Though not given in the *Sūtra*, the tying of auspicious yarns, wearing garlands, the tying of the garments of bride and bridegroom, touching the cup made of banyan leaves,[173] touching the nose at the arrival of the bridegroom, besmearing the chest of the bridegroom with curd etc., and many other customs which the women of the place remember, should be followed." Though Gadādhara does not describe these rituals further they can be explained by reference to modern practices in the wedding rituals of many parts of India.

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[169] Winternitz, *D.K.A.W.*, Vol. XL, p. 80.

[170] *Pār. Gṛ.* I.8.11.

[171] *Āśv. Gṛ.* I.7.1.

[172] *Āśv. Gṛ.* I.2.15.

[173] *Nyagrodhaputikadharanam.*

Hindu marriage today consists of two distinct parts: one part is sacramental and follows the injunctions laid down by the Brahmanical lawgivers and their commentators; the other part is popular and is known as *lokācāra*, which varies from region to region in form as well as in the intensity and extension of its practice and persistence. In the sacramental part, a priest is essential; it is he who is the master of the ceremony; the popular part does not call for the services of any priest. It is very interesting to note the important part that *lokācāra* plays in the Hindu marriage of today, especially in the villages and on the fringes of the outlying tribal regions of India.

Lokācāra has a distinct place for what has come to be known as *strī-ācāra*, the customary rites and rituals practised particularly by the women-folk. These *ācāras* are followed in addition to the usual *śāstric* rites, but they have nevertheless a deep and abiding meaning and significance for the common folk, and add to the colour and romance of the ceremony. In most cases, these customs may have a magical origin or may be linked with fertility cults.

In the *Gṛhyasūtras*, even at that early period, an attempt was made at the partial secularization of Hindu marriage. While insisting on obedience to *śāstric* injunctions, the authors of the *Gṛhyasūtras* had to make concessions to both the *lokācāra* and *strī-ācāra* of different regions. Here are some of the *grāmavacanas* mentioned by Gadādhara, which we consider are still current.

Mangalasūtra or Auspicious Thread :—

A piece of *durvā* grass is tied to a thread soaked with oil and turmeric and tied to the left hand of the bride and the right hand of the groom. The thread is called *Maṅgalasūtra*, auspicious thread.[174]

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[174] Personal knowledge.

A somewhat similar custom is practised by some of the primitive tribes. Among the Birhors, blood is drawn from the little finger of the bride's right hand, and a thread tinged with the blood and with a betel-nut tied to it is slung across her left shoulder. The bridegroom also does the same, but he slings the thread across his right shoulder.[175]

Wearing the Garland

Wearing the garland is common in most parts of India. The bride and bridegroom both wear garlands and at the auspicious moment they look at each other and exchange garlands (three times).[176]

Tying the Garments

The garments of the bride and bridegroom are tied together after the marriage. All the ceremonies on the following day, such as offering of *arghya* to the Sun-god, going seven times round the four banana trees at the four corners of the ceremonial courtyard, are done with their upper garments tied together at the ends.[177] This popular rite, not mentioned in any *Sūtra,* is still performed in Maharashtra and Bengal, in addition to the circumambulation of the fire.

Touching the Nose

The ceremonial reception of the bridegroom is a very popular ritual with the women of Bengal. The ceremony, which is called *varaṇa,* is performed just at the arrival of the groom at the gate and then again before he arrives at the marriage *pandal.* The women come forward with a bamboo tray, full of auspicious articles such as betel, a lamp, *durvā* grass etc. They pick up two articles in two hands, touch the bridegroom's forehead or nose with them one by one, and scatter them in all directions. This little ceremony appears to be a form of *Vaśikaraṇa* or a charm placed upon the groom to ensure his love and faithfulness to the wife. The magical element is present in many of the *strīācāras* connected with the groom's reception at the gate by the women.

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[175] Sarat Ray — *The Birhors,* pp. 182-183.

[176] Personal knowledge.

[177] Personal knowledge.

The custom of greeting and welcoming the bridegroom with a special ceremony by the women of the bride's house is also found in many primitive tribes. Among the Sabaras of Orissa, on the arrival of the bridegroom at the bride's house, the female relatives come to greet him with ghee, betel-nut, turmeric etc. This is followed by a practice called *senka,* in which the women warm over a lamp the tips of their fingers and press them on both the cheeks of the bridegroom.[178] An exactly similar ritual is followed in present day Bengali marriage.

Besmearing the Chest of the Bridegroom with Curd

This ceremony is called *Dadhimaṅgala* in Bengal and is practised even now. The bride and groom at their respective homes are awakened before sunrise on the marriage day and are given curd and rice to eat. Curd or *Dadhi* is also put on their forehead and chest. As the bride and groom are to fast on their marriage day, they are fed early, before the day begins, and curd is supposed to be an auspicious food for commencing a journey, or for eating before any improtant event in one's life.[179]

Thus it is clear that, while maintaining the general Vedic scheme, the *Gṛhyasūtras* had to make certain concessions to the local customs and womanly rites which were slowly and gradually integrated into the Aryan and Brahmanical ritual of marriage.

CERTAIN FEATURES OF THE RITUAL

Ājya and Mahāvyāhṛti Sacrifices

Ājya and *Mahāvyāhṛti* were the two beneficial sacrifices, which were performed at different stages of the marriage ceremony for auspicious results.

Preparation of the *Ājya* : Having put the mess of cooked food on the *Barhis*[180] and put wood on the fire, the sacrificer prepares the *Ājya* as follows. He takes ghee or sesamum oil or failing these, curds, milk, rice gruel. Any of the latter substances can be technically considered as *Ājya*. From the same *Barhis*, he takes two blades of *darbha* grass of the length of one span, to use as purifiers. Putting a herb between them, he cuts them off with the words "purifiers are you, sacred to Viṣṇu". He then wipes them with water with the words "by Viṣṇu's mind, you are purified". Having purified the *Ājya*, he pours it into the *Ājya* pot over which he has laid a *darbha* purifier. Holding the blades of *darbha* with his two thumbs and fourth fingers he purifies the *Ājya* three times, by waving the blades of grass above it, from west to east, once with the Yajus : "May the god Savitṛ purify thee with this uninjured purifier, with the rays of the good Sun" and twice silently. He then sprinkles the purifiers with water and throws them into the fire. He then puts the pot of *Ājya* on the fire and takes it from the fire towards the north.

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[178] Satindra Narayan Ray, Sabaras of Orissa in *Man in India,* Vol. VII, pp. 309-313.

[179] Personal knowledge.

At *Ājya* oblations, whenever they are prescribed, he only prepares the *Ājya* and sacrifices it, taking out parts of it; this presumably implies ladling spoonfuls of *Ājya* on the fire. The text further states that he does not sacrifice two parts or the *Sviṣṭakṛt* oblation; by the two portions we infer that two spoonful are to be left in the pot.

Mahāvyāhṛti is the great *Vyāhṛti* or the utterance of mystical words; according to Brahmanic terminology the three words *Bhūr, Bhuvah, Svar,* pronounced after the *praṇava, Om,* are known as *Vyāhṛtis* or *Mahāvyāhṛtis*.[181] Whenever no special rule is given, one should sacrifice with *Mahāvyāhṛtis* before and after the chief ceremonies.[182]

According to *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*, after the bath of the bride, she puts on a newly dyed garment and the preceptor (*ācārya*) of the bride's family makes the bride sit down behind the fire. While she takes hold of him he sacrifies with *Mahāvyāhṛtis* and makes *Ājya* oblations to Agni, Soma, Prajāpati, Mitra, Indra, Gandharva, Bhaga, Pūṣan, Tvastṛ, and Bṛhaspati.[183] The *Mahāvyāhṛti* is to be repeated three times after all the sacrifices to Agni, Sūrya and Candra. Śāṅkhāyana prescribes that as all sacrifices procure happiness, one is to sacrifice before and afterwards with these same *Mahāvyāhṛtis*. The *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra* is substantially in agreement, mentioning that the bridegroom should sacrifice four *Ājya* oblations or *Vyāhṛtis* before the wedding, after this preliminary sacrifice; the bride sacrifices *Ājya* along with the fried grain in the fire.[184]

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[180] A bed or a layer of *kuśa* grass usually strewn over the sacrificial ground and especially over the *vedi*, to serve as a sacred surface on which the present the oblation and as a seat for the gods and for the sacrificers.

[181] Monier Williams.

[182] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.12.13.

According to *Gobhila Gṛhyasūtra* the bride, after putting on the garment, pushes forward with her foot a rushmat or something else of that kind veiled with clothes. She sits down on the east end of the rushmat to the right of the bridegroom. While she touches his right shoulder with her right hand, he sacrifices six oblations of *Ājya*. It is again offered to the Fire, later with fried grain.[185] In the concluding ceremonies of the marriage, before pointing out the Pole Star, the bridegroom sacrifices six oblations of *Ājya* and pours the remnant of each oblation over the head of the bride, who keeps silence. The *Ājya* is again offered and the *Mahāvyāhṛtis* again repeated if the axle of the chariot is overturned or if some accident happens, in which case the travellers are instructed to put new wood into the fire, besmearing it with the remnant of the *Ājya*.[186] When the bride goes to the bridegroom's house a little boy is placed on her lap and she sacrifices six *Ājya* oblations.[187]

Ājya oblations are offered again on the fourth day of marriage. Having put wood into the fire the bridegroom offers four expiatory *Ājya* oblations to Agni, Vāyu, Candra and Sūrya, and the fifth to the four gods together. The remnant of each oblation should be poured into the water pot. With the contents of this pot the relatives besmear the bride's hair and nails and remove the water by rubbing and washing her.

[183] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.11.4.

[184] *Āśv. Gṛ.* 1.

[185] *Gobh. Gṛ.* III.3.

[186] *Gobh. Gṛ.* IV.10.

[187] *Gobh. Gṛ.* IV.10.

According to *Khādira Gṛhyasūtra,*[188] after the bath of the bride, the bridegroom gives her a garment. Then they both sit down, and while she touches him the bridegroom makes oblations of *Ājya* with the *sruva* (ritual spoon), taking up a portion of the ghee with the *Mahāvyāhṛtis,* and then he makes a fourth oblation with the three *Mahāvyāṛtis* together. The *Mahāvyāhṛtis* should always be repeated after the chief oblation.

Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra[189] says that after the circumambulation of the fire the bridegroom should offer two *Ājya* portions and repeat the *Mahāvyāhṛtis,* and then offer the general expiation, the *Prājāpatya* oblation and the *Sviṣṭakṛt.* These are the regular oblations at every sacrifice.

Throwing of Grain

The practice frequently mentioned in the *Sūtras* of throwing grain and other articles is presumably a fertility rite.

When the wooers come to the bride's home they bring with them flowers, fruits, barley and a pot of water. When the matter pleases both the parties they touch the full vessel, into which has been put flowers, fruit, fried grain barley and gold, and the priest of the family puts the full vessel on the bride's head.[190] Then the priest blesses the bride with the following words :—

प्रजां त्वयि दघामि ।
पशूंस्त्वयि दघामि ।।
तेजो ब्रह्मवर्चसं त्वयि दघामि ।।

"Offspring I put into you, cattle I put into you, splendour and holy lustre I put into you."

The fertility motive is clear not only in the symbolic objects but also in the *mantra* quoted above.
The throwing of different kinds of cereals or fruits by the bride and the bridegroom is also found in the later stages of the marriage ritual.

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[188] *Khād. Gṛ.* I.3.

[189] *Pār. Gṛ.* I.5.

[190] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.6.

The bath water of the bride is mixed with *Klītaka,* barley and beans, according to *Gobhila Gṛhyasūtra.*[191] According to *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*[192] the bath of the bride takes place on the eve of her departure for her husband's home; she is to be washed upto head with water that has been made fragrant by all sorts of herbs and choicest fruits together with scents.

The *Lājahoma,* or sacrifice with fried grain, is symbolical of fertility and prosperity. The brother of the bride pours out of his joined palms into her joined palms fried grain mixed with *śami* leaves. The bride offers them to the Sacred Fire with firmly joined hands. Again after the Saptapadī, (seven steps) before their departure, the relations pour rice etc. on the heads of the couple.[193] This marriage rite can be closely traced to all primitive Indo-Europeans. The custom of throwing grain or fruit on the bride and bridegroom is very well known and practised throughout South-East Asia and Far East,[194] and is well known in modern Europe and America, where the grain is usually replaced by paper 'confetti'.
According to Mannhardt such practices originated from a feeling of sympathetic connection between mankind and seed-bearing grasses and the comparison between the fruit of the body and of corn.[195] They are intended to promote fertility.[196] Among the Muṇḍās the bridegroom throws three handfuls of rice at the forehead of the bride and the bride next throws three handfuls of rice at the forehead of the bridegroom.[197] In Tibet, when the bride arrives at the bridegroom's house, his mother receives her with some barley flour mixed with butter in the right hand and with a jar full of milk in her left hand.[198]

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[191] *Gobh. Gṛ.* II.1.10.

[192] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.11.12.

[193] *Hir. Gṛ.* I.6.20.6.

[194] Westermarck, *H.H.M.,* Vol. II, p. 471.

[195] Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen,* p. 365, ref. to In Westermarck, *H.H.M.,* Vol. II, p. 478.

[196] Winternitz, *D.K.A.W.,* Vol. XL, p. 75.

[197] Westermarck, *H.H.M.,* Vol. II, p. 472.

[198] Westermarck, *H.H.M.,* Vol. II, p. 502.

In ancient Rome[199] nuts were thrown by the bridegroom for the boys present at the wedding ceremony.

In modern Greece coins, rice, sweetmeats and nuts are thrown over the couple and the marriage procession.[200] Westermarck suggests that the purpose of throwing these articles on the bridal pair is also to secure prosperity to the couple after their marriage, especially with regard to the bearing of children in successive generations,[201] and the idea of promoting the material welfare of the couple must have been present in those who initiated the rite.

In Syria and Palestine the throwing of grain and salt on the people at a wedding is said to be a charm against the evil eye.[202] In ancient Greece dried fruits were thrown not only over the bride but also over a newly bought slave, and this too suggests the idea of protection against evil influences.[203] According to Crawley "the practice of throwing rice originated in the idea of giving food to the evil influences to induce them to be propitious and depart."[204]

There may be another reason for this practice. Often, the soul is conceived as a bird ready to take flight. The Bororos of Brazil fancy that the human soul has the shape of a bird, and passes in that shape out of the body in dreams. There is a popular opinion in Bohemia that the parting soul comes forth from the mouth like a white bird. If the soul is a bird on the wing, it may be attracted by rice and so either prevented from taking wing or lured back again from its perilous flight.[205] It may be that the purpose of throwing grain on the bride and bridegroom was also to prevent the soul from flying away.

There must have been more than one purpose of this custom, for it is observed on different occasions for different purposes. Sometimes the same ceremony in a given

[199] Hastings, *E.R.E.*, Vol. VIII, p. 465.

[200] Hastings, *E.R.E.*, Vol. VIII, p. 471.

[201] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, p. 480.

[202] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, p. 482.

[203] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, p. 483.

[204] Crawley, *Mystic* Rose, p. 325, ref. to in Westermarck, Vol. II, p. 483.

[205] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, pt. II, pp. 33-35.

case may be intended to serve more than one purpose and there may have been mixed motives for it. Among the Battas of Sumatra, when a man returns from dangerous enterprise, grains of rice are placed on his head, and these grains are called *padirum tondi,* that is "means to make the soul (*tondi*) stay at home."[206] In Java also rice is placed on the head of a person who returns home unexpectedly after he has been taken for lost.[207]

In present day Bengal, on the day before that fixed for the marriage ceremony, an important ritual named *Adhibāsa* has to be gone through. On this occasion a number of articles, namely paddy, fried rice, *durvā*-grass, sandal-wood paste, turmeric, fruits, flowers, ghee, curd, gold, silver and copper pieces, conch-shells etc. are placed on a bamboo winnowing fan or *Kulā* which is called *Varaṇa dālā.* The respective priests bless the bride and the bridegroom in their respective homes by anointing their foreheads with sandal paste and by touching the *Varaṇa dālā* on their forehead. This action might have the same effect as if the objects on the fan were scattered over the bride's head. A piece of *durvā* grass is then tied on a thread, soaked with oil and turmeric, and tied to the left hand of the bride and right hand of the groom. This thread is called *Maṅgalasūtra* (auspicious thread).[208]

In many parts of Bengal gifts are sent on this occasion, to the bride. Some of the groom's party carry oil, turmeric, betel-nut, vermilion, clothes, ornaments, curd, sweets, and a pair of fish and a cocoanut with them to the bride's home. Sometimes musicians accompany them.

There is another similar ceremony practised in some parts of Bengal. Early in the morning on the wedding day women of the village, accompanied by the parents of the bride, go to the nearest pond or stream to fetch water. The father takes with him an axe or some other instrument of the kind, and the mother takes a pitcher with her. In the absence of the bride's parents any married couple may take their place for the purpose. Arriving at the stream, the father with his axe gives a stroke into the water, and the mother immediately fills her pitcher from that place and brings it home. Then five fruits and five garlands are placed in the pitcher and its mouth is carefully covered up. On the wedding night the bridegroom is made to open the cover of the pitcher and pick up the fruits as advised by the women present. These fruits are symbols of future offspring. This rite shows the use of fruits as fertility symbols in common with those earlier mentioned, but here they are not scattered over the bride or brought in contact with her.

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[206] Frazer, *Golden Bough,* pt. II, pp. 33-35.
[207] Frazer, *Golden Bough,* pt. II, pp. 34-35.
[208] Personal knowledge.

Similar customs of fetching water are followed by many primitive tribes of India. Among the Birhors two pitchers full of water are fetched from a nearby stream, pond or spring, by two girls. While going to draw water, they are accompanied by some married women, one of whom carries an axe or, if available a sword, and another, a bow and an arrow. Arriving at the tank, one of the women puts three marks of vermilion somewhere on the bank, and gives three strokes with axe or sword into the water, and the pitchers are then filled. When the bridegroom and the women relatives of the bride have been ceremonially introduced to one another, the two girls come out with their pitchers of water, and with small mango twigs sprinkle the water over the bridegroom. His father gives two coins to each of the two girls.[209]

There is a somewhat similar practice among the Muṇḍās. The bride goes to the stream with her pitcher and having filled it, raises it aloft on her head, steadying it with the hand. The bridegroom comes behind as she turns homewards, and resting his hands on her shoulders, shoots an arrow along the path in front of her, through the loop formed by her uplifted arm. She picks up the arrow with her foot, still balancing the pitcher on her head. Taking it in her hand she gives it to the bridegroom. He again shoots the arrow in front of her, thus showing his ability to protect her.[210]

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[209] Sarat Ray, *The Birhors*, pp. 182-183.

The use of the arrow in marriage ceremonies seems to be very significant. Not unoften is it used as a symbol of the embryo. According to *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*[211] the bridegroom utters the following verse just before cohabitation :—

वृषाणं वृसन्नाघेहि प्रजायै त्वा हवामहे ।
यस्य योर्निं पतिरेतोगृमाय पुमान् पुत्रो धीयतां गर्भे अन्तः तं पिपृहि
दशमास्योन्तरुदरे स जायताम् श्रैष्ठ्यतमस्वनमिति वा ॥

"May a male embryo enter your womb, as an arrow the quiver; may a man be born here, a son after ten months."

Throwing of Ashes

A peculiar ceremony, involving the scattering of substances less auspicious than grain, is mentioned in the *Dīgha Nikāya*.[212] In the *Agañña Sutta* it is said that, when the world was young and pure, and sexual passion first began to arise in men and women, people reproached them for their unseemly behaviour, and threw sand, ashes or cowdung at them as a sign of contempt. The text further states that the reviling of the bride and bridegroom and the throwing of these things are still practised at weddings, but that people have forgotten their true significance. The Buddhist author here evidently tries to give a moral explanation of a popular custom of his time. It is likely that the actual purpose of the custom was to remove evil spirits, by deceiving them into thinking that the bride and bridegroom, instead of being the centre of interest and admiration, were in fact scorned and disapproved of. To-day, the Indian mother who has lost many children will give a particularly nasty name to her surviving child, in order to cheat the spirits into thinking that it is worthless or repulsive, and thereby try to save its life. In any case it is evident that this custom had no connection with the auspicious scattering of rice. We have no knowledge of such a rite prevalent in India at present.

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[210] Sarat Ray, *The Mundas and their Countries*, pp. 449-450.

[211] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.19.6.

[212] *D. N.* III, p. 89.

Silence Observed in Marriage

In the rituals, we find that rites are performed either with or without formulae, and the oblations are offered either vocally or silently.

Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra[213] mentions that after the bride's father declares his assent, the bridegroom offers sacrifice. He carries forward the fire either with the verse "into thy womb" or silently. The bride should sit silently when the sun has set, until the Pole Star appears. She breaks the silence when the Pole Star, Arundhatī, and the seven Ṛṣis appear, and utters the following verse : "May my husband live and I get offspring".[214]

At the marriage, a Brāhmaṇa with water-pot wrapped in his robe, keeping silence, should step in front of the fire, should station himself to the south of it with his face to the north. This Brāhmaṇa is presumably normally the *Purohita* who performs the marriage ceremony. At the time of the Seven Steps a man who holds a water pot on his shoulder stands silent to the south, or according to some to the north, of the fire. From that pot, he sprinkles the bride's head with water.[215]

The significance of the silence in the performance of religious rites is explained in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[216] in connection with the preparation of the altar. Certain furrows are ploughed and certain libations made with an accompaniment of spoken words, and others silently, for "what is silent is undetermined and the undetermined is everything."

In the *Gṛhyasūtra* some of the *mantras* are uttered by the bridegroom or the *Purohita* on behalf of the bride. At the time of the oblation with the fried grain the husband murmurs the following text on behalf of his wife, presumably because she was observing silence:—"This woman, strewing grain prays thus, 'May I bring bliss to my relations, may my husband live long *svāhā* !' "[217]

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[213] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.16.

[214] *Āśv. Gṛ.* I.7.22.

[215] *Khād. Gṛ.* I.3.5.

[216] *Śat. Brāh.* VII. 2.2.13-14.

[217] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* I.16.3.

Silence, is also often imposed on the bride at the wedding ceremony in other parts of the world. For instance, a Moorish bride must not speak at the wedding, or, if she has something to say to any of the women attending her, she must speak in a whisper, and she should not be spoken to in the presence of others.[218] In Persia the bride must not speak to anyone and in Korea, she is expected to keep absolute silence on the wedding day and in the nuptial chamber.[219] Among various peoples women are forbidden to speak with anyone but their husband for some time after marriage. In some African tribes young wives are even forbidden to speak with their husbands until the birth of a child. These taboos arise from different motives. Sir James Frazer believes that the silence of the wife till their first child is born rests on the superstitious belief that she is specially liable to the attentions of evil spirits until after her first pregnancy.[220] It is probable that the insistence on the bride's silence in several parts of the Hindu ceremony, was originally, lest she should attract these evil spirits.

Unloosening Knots and Locks

Two knots of the bride's hair are to be loosened by the groom after the rite of stepping on the stone and walking round the fire. In the *Mānava Gṛhyasūtra*[221] the bridegroom, after having drawn together the ends of the bride's garment with *darbha* grass, makes a knot. The "rope" with which the bride is thus girdled is loosened, and is fastened again when she is made to sit on the red bull's hide.

The magical effect of knots in trammelling and obstructing human activity was believed to be manifested at marriage. During the Middle Ages and down to the 18th century, it seems to have been commonly held in Europe that consummation of marriage could be prevented by any one who, while the wedding ceremony was taking place, threw either a locked padlock or a knotted cord into water; until this had been found and unlocked or untied, as the case might be, no union of the married couple was possible.[222]

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[218] Westermarck, *R.B.M.*, Vol. I, p. 253.

[219] Westermarck, *H.H.M.*, Vol. II, p. 596.

[220] Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. IV, p. 236 seq.

[221] *Mān. Gṛ.* I.11.5.

A curious use is made of knots at marriage in the little Indonesian island of Rotti. When the man has paid the price of his bride, a cord is fastened round her waist, if she is a maiden, but not otherwise. Nine knots are tied in the cord, and in order to make them harder to unloose they are smeared with wax. Bride and bridegroom are then secluded in a chamber, where he has to untie the knots with the thumb and forefinger of his left hand only. It may be from one to twelve months before he succeeds in undoing them all. Until he has done so he may not look on the woman as his wife. The meaning of this custom is not clear, but can be conjectured that the nine knots refer to the nine months of pregnancy.[223]

Fire Kindled by Attrition

According to the *Gṛhyasūtras* the Sacred Fire should be worshipped on five occasions — the wedding, the tonsure of the child's head, the initiation of the *brahmacārin*, the cutting of the beard, and the parting of the hair. According to some teachers the fire used in the marriages should be kindled by the bridegroom by friction.[224]

Many primitive peoples see in the working of the fire-drill an analogy to the intercourse of the sexes, and accordingly they identify the upright pointed stick with the male. This symbolism is common among many African tribes. In Laongo, public fires were kept perpetually burning during the king's reign and were extinguished at his death. When the new king came to the throne the new public fire was kindled by the friction of two sticks, regarded as male and female respectively, which were manipulated by a youth and a maiden. After performing this solemn function they were compelled to complete the analogy by cohabiting with each other in public, after which they were buried alive.[225]

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[222] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, pt. II. ed. III, p. 299.

[223] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, pt. II. ed. III, p. 301.

[224] *Pār. Gṛ.* I.5.1.7-22.

In India the Birhors, a primitive tribe of Chota Nagpur, still produce fire by the old method of the fire-drill, the sticks which they recognize as male and female respectively.

Looking at Each Other

The rite of looking at each other is mentioned in only one of the *Gṛhyasūtras*. According to *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra*,[226] the bride and bridegroom are made to look at each other by the bride's father. The bridegroom recites the following verse :—

> अघोरचक्षुरपतिघ्न्येधिशिवा पशुभ्यः सुमनाः सुवर्चाः ।
> वीरसूर्देवकामा स्योनाशं नो द्विपदे शं चतुष्पदे ॥ (ऋ १०.८५.४४)

"With no evil eye, not bringing death to your husband, bring luck to the cattle, be full of joy and vigour. Give birth to heroes; be godly and friendly. Bring us luck, to men and animals."

According to Āpastamba[227] with this verse the bridegroom should look at the bride. From the expression *aghoracakṣur*, it seems that the bridegroom looks at her eyes. But Haradatta says that with this verse he looks at the bride limb by limb. As he looks at her, he murmurs 'do not look with terrible eyes' etc.

The purpose of the *sūtra* is a kind of exorcism of the bride in order to make her harmless to human beings. The fear of evil coming through women is evident from the verses of Pāraskara,[228] where it is laid down that the husband should offer sacrifices on the fourth day after the wedding to Agni, Vāyu, Sūrya, Candra and Gandharva respectively to protect the cattle and the house from destruction caused by the magic influence which may dwell in the wife.

According to Āpastamba, after looking at the bride, the bridegroom seizes with his thumb and fourth finger a

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[225] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Vol. II, pt. 1, p. 208.

[226] *Pār. Gṛ.* I.4.

[227] *Āp. Gṛ.* IV.4.

[228] *Pār. Gṛ.* II.2-4.

darbha blade, strokes the space between her eyebrows with it, and then throws it away.

Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Pariśiṣta says[229] that first of all a length of cloth is held between the bridegroom and the bride and that at the proper astrological moment it is removed and then the two see each other.

This practice is even observed now. There are slight differences in the details of the ceremony in different societies and different localities. In some places the bridegroom stands on a decorated wooden seat; the bride is made to sit on another and is carried by her relatives or led by them seven times round the bridegroom. This being done, the bride is carried before the bridegroom and raised up and put face to face with him, and both are covered by a common veil thrown over them. At the auspicious moment, they look at each other and exchange garlands three times. Women scatter flowers and fried grain over the veil.[230]

Wedding Anniversary

There is a doubtful reference to the celebration of the wedding anniversary in the *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra,* which mentions that "on that day" the bride and bridegroom may eat that food of which they are fond. Haradatta holds that the words "on that day" do not refer to the days of the new and full moon, the *Parva*-days mentioned in a previous *sūtra.*[231] He has given two reasons for this view. First, the permission to eat food, of which the householder may be particularly fond, is already referred to in *sūtra* 6 by the term *tṛptiḥ* or satisfaction. Secondly, the singular 'on that day' does not agree with the plural 'on the *parva* days.' Basing his argument on these grounds, he comes to the conclusion that the words 'on that day' must refer to the wedding day, mentioned in *sūtra* 1, as well as to its anniversary. Certain special rules are observed on that day. The husband and wife should sleep on the ground on the raised heap of earth and should avoid intercourse; and on the next day a *Sthālīpāka*[232] must be offered. The offering of *Sthālīpāka* is described in detail in *Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra.*[233] The wife husks the rice grain out of which this *Sthālīpāka* is prepared. Then the husband sprinkles *Ājya* over it, take it from the fire towards the east or the north, and again sprinkles it with *ājya*. Then he sacrifices the *Sthālīpāka,* while the wife takes hold of him. Agni is the deity of the first oblation. Agni Sviṣṭakṛt is the second deity. At the Sviṣṭakṛt oblation the 'spreading under' of the *ājya* and taking an *avadāna* (cut-off portion) are done once, and the sprinkling over of the *ājya* twice. The *avadāna* of the first deity is taken out of the middle of the *Sthālīpāka* and offered to the centre of the fire. The *avadāna* for the second deity is taken from the northern part of the *Sthālīpāka,* which is offered over the easterly part of the fire. The husband silently anoints the *Barhis* by dipping it into the remains of the *Sthālīpāka* and the *Ājya.* Then he throws the part of the *Barhis* called *Prastara* into the fire. He gives the remains of that sacrificial food with butter to a Brāhmaṇa to eat. He also presents a bull to that Brāhmaṇa.

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[229] *Āśv. Gṛ.* Par. I.23.

[230] Personal knowledge.

[231] *Āp. Dh.* II.1.1.4.

[232] A dish of whole rice boiled in milk.

[233] *Āv. Gṛ.* III.

CHAPTER III

FORMS OF MARRIAGE

Marriage by Capture

The different forms of marriage, which are very commonly referred to in the later period, are not mentioned in the *Ṛg-Veda,* where there are no traces of regular marriage by capture or purchase. Occasional instances of marriage by capture are found in the *Ṛg-Veda,* for instance, the reference to Vimada carrying away the daughter of Purumitra without her parents' consent, but possibly with her own willingness.[1] But these occasional instances are perhaps mere knightly feats, or unions as a result of mutual attraction.

Svayaṃvara

There is one doubtful reference to marriage of the *Svayaṃvara* type in the *Ṛg-Veda.* There is a reference to Suryā's ascending the chariot of the Aśvins after securing the approval of the gods. The explanation given by Sāyana is: There were many suitors of Sūryā, and it was agreed that the competitors had to run up to the Sun, and that Sūryā should be given to the victor as his bride. In this contest the Aśvins won, and so Sūryā ascended their chariot. But we have only the word of Sāyana for this interpretation, and the phrase may merely be a reflection of a normal tribal marriage, with the approval of the tribal elders.

In these references there is no mention of ritual accompanying the marriage, and they do not seem to reflect the usual marriage customs of the *Ṛg-Vedic* age. There is only one hymn in the *Ṛg-Veda,* used later in the regular wedding ritual, which throws light on the character of the marriage rite of the times. In this hymn we have a definite proof of the existence of marriage as a social institution. By the performance of rituals, the girl was raised to the status of *dharmapatnī* and was allowed to address the *Vidatha*. Though not explicitly stated in the hymn, the concept of marriage according to the Vedic marriage rituals appears to have been one of undying spiritual union of the couple by magic *mantras*.

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[1] *R.V.* I. 116.1.

Marriage was considered desirable and even imperative for a girl. There are prayers and incantations for securing a husband for a woman.

इयमग्ने नारी पतिं विदेष्ट सोमो हि राजा सुभगां कृणोति ।
सुवाना पुत्रान्महिषी भवाति गत्वा पतिं सुभगा वि राजतु ।। (अ. २.३६.३)

"May this woman, O Agni, find a husband, for king Soma makes her for good fortune; giving birth to sons, may she become chief queen (mahiṣī) having gone to a husband, let her, having good fortune, bear rule."

A detailed study of the rituals of the *Gṛhyasūtras* shows in most cases the absence of the ceremony of gift of the girl. The *Pāṇigrahaṇa* is universal among all the Indo-European races.[2] But neither in the Vedas nor among any Indo-European race is this preceded by a ceremonial gift of the girl, though this forms one of the most essential ceremonies in Hindu marriage at the present day. So it seems that even the first four forms of marriage *Brāhma, Daiva, Ārṣa* and *Prājāpatya*, the essential element of which is the gift of the girl, were not yet recognized at the time of the *Gṛhyasūtras*.

Among all the *Gṛhyasūtras Mānava Gṛhyasūtra*[3] mentions only the Brāhma and Śaulka forms. The other texts, with the exception of Āśvalāyana, allow only one form of marriage, which has no special appellation. Mānava is however later in date than the major *Gṛhyasūtras*.

The eight different kinds of marriage were described for the first time in the *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra*.[4] But the relevant chapter is wholly out of tune with the rest of the

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[2] See above p. 37.
[3] *Mān. Gr.* 1.7.11-12.
[4] Āśv. Gṛ. 1.6.

Gṛhyasūtras, and so seems to be a later interpolation.[5] Therefore we must conclude that the eight forms of marriage were introduced only at the time of the *Dharmsūtras,* all of which mention at least some of them.

The Eight Forms of Marriage

The Brāhma

Brāhma is the form of marriage in which the bridegroom is invited by the father of the bride. Decked with ornaments, she is given as a gift to the groom after the father's having enquired regarding his family, character, learning and health. The essential aspect of this form of marriage is that the bride is a gift from her father to the groom. Vaśiṣṭha and Āśvalāyana mention that the gift is made by pouring out a libation of water.[6] Baudhāyana[7] mentions that in *Brāhma* form the bridegroom asks for the hand of the bride.

All the law-givers[8] mention that the bride should be decked with ornaments according to the best of the ability of her father.[9] This is one of the orthodox and approved forms of marriage. As with the other three forms, the father has the obligation to give a dowry for his daughter to the husband. The bride has no part in the choice of her husband, which depends entirely on her father or guardian.

The Daiva

The bride is given to the officiating priest, who performs sacrifice for her father. According to this form, the bride is given as part of the sacrificial fee.

Govinda's commentary on Baudhāyana[10] says that the recipient has to accept the gift and the regular marriage ceremony is performed later.

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[5] N. C. Sengupta, *Evolution of Ancient Indian Law,* p. 83.

[6] *Vaś. Dh.* 1.30, *Aśv. Gṛ.* I. 6.1.

[7] *Baudh. Dh.* I.11.2.

[8] *Āp. Dh.* II.5; *Āśv. Gṛ.* I.6.1; *Gaut. Dh.* IV.6. *Kām.* III.5.

[9] *Āp. Dh.* II.5.11.17.

[10] *Baudh. Dh.* I.11.20.5.

According to Jolly[11] the sacrificial priest is, as is often the case, inferior in position to the virtuous and learned Brāhmaṇa.

In the *Daiva vivāha* the bride has no choice of her husband; it is made by the father or guardian. The participation of the priest is probably not necessary because the priest is himself the bridegroom in this form of marriage.

The Prājāpatya

The *Prājāpatya* form of marriage implies the gift of the bride to the bridegroom with the injunction that they should never cease to perform *dharma* together.

According to the Mitākṣarā of Haradatta on Gautama, though in the *Brāhma* form they are supposed to perform *dharma* together, the injunction that they should 'perform *dharma* together' is the peculiarity of this form. The commentator[12] adds that the bridegroom cannot enter into another *Āśrama* and that he should not take another wife. This is the difference between the *Brāhma* and *Prājāpatya* forms. According to Gooroodas Banerjee,[13] the bridegroom asks for the bride's hand, and that factor distinguishes it from the *Brāhma* form and makes it inferior to the latter, in which the bridegroom is invited by her father to accept the bride. Altekar[14] thinks that as *Brāhma* and *Prājāpatya* are virtually synonymous words possibly *Brāhma* marriage was originally identical with the *Prājāpatya*. He bases his argument on the fact that two of the early writers, Vaśiṣṭha and Āpastamba, do not mention *Prājāpatya* marriage at all, but refer only to three approved forms, *Brāhma, Daiva* and *Ārṣa*.

The more probable explanation seems to be the suggestion made by Dr. N. C. Sengupta. Vaśiṣṭha and Āpastamba mention *Gāndharva* in the place of *Prājāpatya* marriage. It may be, that *Prājāpatya* is only a rationalised form of the *Gāndharva.* The essential elements of both the *Gāndharva* and the *Prājāpatya* are more or less the same, only in the *Prājāpatya* form the parents' consent is necessary. Dr. Sengupta[15] thinks that the *Prājāpatya* form is the outcome of the reaction of the sacred law which did not approve of the *Gāndharva* or love marriage, but had to accept it as it was popular. So the law-givers added the injunction that they should never cease to perform *dharma* together. In some of *Dharmasūtras* we find the mention of *Prājāpatya* but not of the *Gāndharva* form of marriage.

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[11] Jolly, *Hindu Law and Customs*, p. 116.

[12] Haradatta on *Gaut. Dh.* IV.7.

[13] Gooroodas Banerjee, *The Hindu Law of Marriage and Stridhana*, p. 78.

[14] Altekar, *P.W.H.C.*, p. 46.

The Ārṣa

In the *Ārṣa* form, the bridegroom presents the bride's father, or any other person who has authority over her, with a bull and a cow. Manu[16] tries to prove that the receipt of a pair of cattle does not constitute the sale of the bride. The commentators say that the price that was given was returned, probably in the form of dowry, and therefore cannot be considered as a price but only as a means of honouring the bride.

In this kind of marriage, like the others, the bride does not have any say in the selection of the bridegroom. The difference between the *Ārṣa* and the other forms lies in the fact that the choice is made, first by the suitor, who gives the gift of a cow and a bull, after which the parents' consent is needed.

These are the four orthodox forms of marriage and approved by the lawgivers. The essential element of all is the gift of the bride with the libation of water. It would seem that the lawgivers intended that the full marriage ritual should be performed in one of these forms. Though this is not explicitly stated, the *Sūtra* writers evidently looked on the ceremony as essential for higher class people at least. It can hardly be believed that they intended that any of these approved forms of marriage should be performed without a religious ceremony. The other four forms are independent of any gift and the bride is acquired by the same way as that by which any "property" is acquired. These four forms are : *Rākṣasa, Āsura, Gāndharva* and *Paiśāca.*

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[15] N. C. Sengupta, *Evolution of Ancient Indian Law*, pp. 92-93.

[16] *Manu.* III. 53.

The Rākṣasa

Rākṣasa is the form of marriage in which the girl is forcibly carried away against her will from her father's house. The striking element of this form is the forcible abduction. Vaśiṣṭha[17] is of opinion that the guardians had to be destroyed by force of arms. The *Kāmasūtra*[18] says that they are to be attacked or wounded, while according to Manu[19] they are slain or wounded and their house broken open. The *Rākṣasa* form was not approved by the *Dharmasūtra* writers, though they had to make some provision for it in society. Vaśiṣṭha[20] mentions this as a *Kṣātra* rite, suggesting that this form of marriage may be common among Kṣatriyas, who must have found it suitable on certain occasions.

Evidently by the institution of *Rākṣasa* marriage the girl carried away by the enemy raiders was given a legal status, and the lawgivers may well have admitted her on account of the unsettled conditions which prevailed from time to time in many parts of India.

The Āsura

The *Āsura* is the marriage by purchase, where the bride is acquired by paying a suitable price to her parents. Vaśiṣṭha mentions it as a *Mānuṣa* rite,[21] presumably meaning that it was common among the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras.

The texts are not very specific about the exact amount of money to be paid. Āpastamba[22] says that one should pay according to one's ability; similarly Manu[23] says that the suitor has to pay as much as he can afford. Vaśiṣṭha[24] lays down the exact amount to be paid. "If a gift of one thousand oxen fit to draw a carriage (has been bestowed) according to the rule on a perfectly worthy man, that is equal to giving a maiden." But the same *Dharmasūtra* in another place says that one thousand cows besides a carriage should be given.[25] This figure seems exorbitant, and perhaps only applied to the very small circle of wealthy people for whom the *Sūtras* were primarily meant. In so far as the *Sūtras* were followed by ordinary people the number of oxen paid to the bride's father must naturally be much less.

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[17] *Vaś. Dh.* I. 34.

[18] *Kām.* III. 31.

[19] *Manu.* III. 33.

[20] *Vaś. Dh.* 1.35.

[21] *Vaś. Dh.* 1.35.

[22] *Āp. Dh.* II.5.12.

[23] *Manu.* III.31.

[24] *Vaś. Dh.* XXIX. 21.

The *Āsura* marriage was disapproved by the *Dharmasūtra* writers and considered one of the inferior forms. The general disapproval of the selling of daughters is expressed in all the *Dharmasūtras*. Baudhāyana[26] mentions that those who give away their daughter for a price commit a great sin, fall into a dreadful place of punishment after death, and degrade their family down to the seventh generation. But in spite of the general dislike for the sale of brides, the *Āsura* form of marriage had to be accepted in society. The bride thus purchased was not considered eligible to take part in sacrifices offered to the gods of the manes.[27]

The Gāndharva

The reference to *Gāndharva vivāha* has been interpreted in different ways by different scholars. Dr. P. V. Kane[28] says that "in the *Gāndharva* form the principal object was the gratification of carnal desires." Jolly[29] describes it as "the love-marriage without the consent of the parents." Gooroodas Banerjee[30] says that "marriage in this form, which depends merely upon the agreement of the contracting parties, resembles to some extent what are called Gretna-Green marriages, that is runaway marriages by persons governed by English law at Gretna Green and elsewhere in Scotland, to evade the provision of law against ill-advised and clandestine marriage". Mayne[31] says that "the *Gāndharva* marriage springs from desire and has sexual intercourse for its purpose."

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[25] *Vaś. Dh.* I. 36.
[26] *Baudh. Dh.* I.11.21.3. cf. *Āp. Dh.* I. 6.13.11 and *Manu* III. 51.
[27] *Baudh. Dh.* I. 11.21.2
[28] Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II. pt. 1, p. 519.
[29] Jolly, *Hindu Law and Customs*, p. 111.
[30] G. Banerjee, *Hindu Law of Marriage and Stridhana*, p. 81.

It seems that the definitions of Kane and Mayne are based on the following verse of Manu :

इच्छयान्योन्य संयोगः कन्यायाश्च वरस्य च
गान्धर्वः स तु विज्ञेयो मैथुन्यः कामसंभवः (मनु. ३.३२)

"The voluntary union of a maiden and her lover one must know (to be) the Gāndharva rite, which springs from desire and has sexual intercourse for its purpose."

We have plenty of evidence that *Gāndharva* was a love marriage, but the expressions *maithunyaḥ* and *Kāmasambhavaḥ* in Manu are to be specially noted. Though it is not mentioned in other *Dharmasūtras*, from Manu's words it seems clear that sexual intercourse is preceded by the *Gāndharva* form of marriage. From the point of view of this source at any rate it is not the mere legalisation of a liaison or casual sexual encounter, but a solemn agreement between two parties before sexual relations have taken place.

Vaśiṣṭha mentions that the lover has to take a girl of equal caste in this form of marriage. But this does not seem to be a natural rule, and in the numerous references to *Gāndharva* forms of marriage in the epics we find that marriage took place between young men and young women of different castes. Vaśiṣṭha must have laid down this rule to restrict the scope of *Gāndharva* marriage.

The Paiśāca

Only Gautama and Baudhāyana mention the *Paiśāca*[32] marriage. *Paiśāca* form of marriage is the seduction of or sexual intercourse of a maiden while she is asleep or intoxicated. The difference between *Rākṣasa vivāha* and

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[31] John. D. Mayne, *A Treatise of Hindu Law and Usage*, p. 121, 11th Ed.

[32] *Vaś. Dh.* I. 88.

Paiśāca vivāha is not very great. In the *Rākṣasa vivāha* the girl is taken away by force, while in the *Paiśāca vivāha* she is taken by deception and fraud, and is always considered to be the worst type of marriage. Āpastamba and Vaśiṣṭha do not mention this form at all.

Approved Forms of Marriage

There is widest diversity of opinion among the different *Dharmasūtra* writers about the description or definition of the various forms and their acceptibility. According to Gautama[33] the first four forms are lawful, and he adds that "in the opinion of some"[34] the *Gāndharva* and *Āsura* forms are also lawful. It seems that these two forms were yet struggling for recognition in society. Gautama does not recognize the *Rākṣasa* and *Paiśāca* at all. He says that a son born of a wife married according to the *Brāhma* rite saves ten ancestors, ten descendants and himself. Gautama is known to be the oldest *Dharmasūtra* writer and it has even been suggested that its date is as early as 500 B.C.[35] It seems that at that period not all the eight forms of marriage of the later period were recognized. Only the first four were legally accepted and *Gāndharva* and *Āsura* were partially accepted.

At the time of Vaśiṣṭha six forms are recognized; he replaces the terms *Rākṣasa* and *Āsura* by *Kṣātra* and *Mānuṣa* respectively. This probably indicates that in his society the *Rākṣasa*, form of marriage had become very common among the Kṣatriyas and *Āsura* among the Vaiśyas and *Paiśāca* for the Śūdras.

Āpastamba[36] recognizes only six and excludes *Prājāpatya* and *Paiśāca* forms. This probably implies that these two forms were not accepted in the society of the time, which is taken to be about 400 B.C.[37] Moreover, Āpastamba belonged to South India. It is possible that the *Prājāpatya* form may not have been prevalent in the South while it was in practice in northern India earlier, as it has been referred to in the *Gautama Dharmasūtra.*

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[33] *Gaut. Dh.* IV.

[34] *Gaut. Dh.* IV. 15.

[35] Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 258-259.

[36] *Āp. Dh.* II.5.11-12.

[37] *Baudh. Dh.* I. 11.20.

Baudhāyana[38] lists all the eight forms and says that the first four, namely the *Brāhma, Prājāpatya, Ārṣa* and *Daiva* are lawful for the Brāhmaṇas and each earlier is preferable to the next. The fifth and seventh, the *Rākṣasa* and *Gāndharva* are lawful for the Kṣatriyas, the *Āsura* for the Vaiśyas and the *Paiśāca* for the Śūdras.

From the account of different *Dharmasūtras* it appears that on the beginning only the first three forms, namely *Brāhma, Daiva,* and *Ārṣa,* were approved and *Rākṣasa* came to be recognized only to a limited circle of Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas. The *Prājāpatya* seems to be a later addition as a rationalized form of *Gāndharva* marriage. *Paiśāca* never received the whole hearted sanction of the lawgivers.

It is probable that the recognition of these lower forms of marriage was due to the prevalence of rape, seduction and liaison in some sections of society at least. By thus giving them recognition, the position of the woman and her children was to some extent safeguarded.

The *Gṛhyasūtras* give no instruction on the rituals to be performed in the lower forms of marriage. It seems probable from the fact that the Brāhmaṇas generally disapproved of them, that they were looked on as secular marriages, and no religious rites were performed in connection with them.

Only at a later period do we find that the marriage rituals are performed after the actual marriage, to raise its status.

Forms of Marriage in Vinaya[39] Piṭaka

Different ways of acquiring wives are referred to in the *Vinaya Piṭaka,* where ten kinds of wives are mentioned. "One bought with money, one kept for passion, a kept woman, one who receives clothes, one who provides water, one who takes off the pad (for the burden she carries on the head), the slave and wife, the servant and wife, the 'flag-brought', the wife for the moment." In the next śloka these kinds are explained. "Bought with money" means having bought her with money, he makes her stay. "Kept for passion" means the dear one makes the dear one stay. "A kept woman" means giving her wealth he makes her stay. "One who receives clothes" means, giving a garment, he makes her stay. "One who provides water" means, having handled a bowl of water, he makes her stay. "One who takes off pad" means taking down the pad he makes her stay. "A slave" means she is a slave and a wife. "A servant" means she is a servant and a wife. "Flag brought" means a woman taken in a raid. "A temporary wife" means a wife for a moment. The commentary on the *Vinaya* tries to explain these forms still more clearly. In the case of "the kept woman" it is said that a country woman comes to be a wife, having received the household implements. "The one who receives clothes" has been explained as that receiving as much as a garment or a cloak, a vagabond woman is raised to be a wife. "One who provides water" has been explained in the commentary as - in this type of marriage the couple plunge their two hands into one pot of water, and the man says — "joined like this water so let them not be divided. "A slave woman" is explained as one who works in the house for wages, someone lives a household life with her, not satisfied with his own life. "Flag-brought" is explained as: Having gone with army erecting the flag, plundering another district, she is brought back. If anyone makes her his wife, she is called "flag-brought".

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[38] Bühler, *S.B.E.*, Vol. II. Introduction, IV-VI; Kane, *H.D.S.*, Vol. II, Pt. 1, chronological table.

[39] *V.P.* V. 4.1-5.

Many of these forms are similar to those of the *Dharmasūtras*. The wife bought with money is similar to the bride in the *Āsura* form of marriage. The "one who is kept for passion" may be similar to the bride in the *Gāndharva* form of marriage. The "flag-brought" wives may possibly be equivalent to those of the *Rākṣasa* marriage.

The description given by the commentators of the kind where "one who provides water" is similar to the ceremony of libation of water in the *Sūtras*, which is considered to be one of the most important ceremonies of marriage. The other types do not seem to be wives in the proper sense of the term but mere concubines. Similar types of marriage are mentioned in both the *Dharmasūtras* and the *Vinaya* texts, probably because they refer to more or less the same period, 600 B.C. to 300 B.C.

Kauṭilya[30] and *Smṛitis* mention the same eight forms of marriage. In the *Manu Saṃhitā* the eight forms are enumerated in the following order — *Brāhma, Daiva, Prājāpatya, Āsura, Gāndharva, Rākṣasa* and *Paiśāca.* All the forms are more or less the same as in the *Sūtras.* But in Manu[40] the *Gāndharva* form has two sub-divisions combined with the *Rākṣasa vivāha,* and not combined with this form. Medhātithi's commentary on this explains the former type as occurring when a girl, while living in her father's house, falls in love with a man, and, as she is not her own mistress, requests her lover to take her away by some means or other. The bridegroom being very strong carries her away after having killed and wounded her guardian. Manu mentions that this form of marriage, whether mixed or separate, is lawful for the Kśatriyas.

We find various instances of this form of mixture of *Rākṣasa* and *Gāndharva* marriage in the epic. Arjuna's marriage with Subhadrā,[41] is an example of mixed *Gāndharva* marriage, while Śakuntalā's marriage with Duṣyanta[42] is an example of the *Gāndharva* marriage in pure form.

Sale of Girls

Like the *Dharmasūtras,* Manu also speaks against the sale of girls. He considers this to be one of the greatest sins and the father who takes even the smallest gratuity for his daughter is considered a "seller of his offspring."[43] But in another place Manu lays down rules which assume the sale of girls as an accepted fact. He says that, if one girl is shown and another is given to the bridegroom, the bridegroom has the right to marry both the girls for the

[30] *Kaut,* III. Ch. 2.

[40] *Manu.* III. p. 26.

[41] See below, p.

[42] See below, p.

[43] *Manu.* III. pp. 51-52.

same price, and the father is bound to give both of them to the bridegroom.[44] Ludwig Sternbach[45] tries to explain this contradiction by saying that this rule of purchase, like other rules in Manu concerning *Āsura vivāha,* is archaic. But this does not seem to be correct. It is true that the general opinion of the lawgivers was against the sale of a girl,[46] but it is evident that this was practised quite frequently. The very strength of the lawgivers' opposition strongly suggests that these forms were by no means extinct. *Āsura* and other lower forms of marriage are more readily accepted in the *Smṛtis* than in the *Dharmasūtras.* We find that Āpastmba, Gautama and others recognize the *Āsura* marriage, but only for the Vaiśya caste, and it is never considered praiseworthy.[47] Manu[48] however permits *Āsura* marriage even for the Brāhmaṇas. It seems that, in spite of the general dislike, this form had been accepted in society owing perhaps to the inter-mixture of peoples.

Svayaṃvara

The *Svayaṃvara* of the epics is not mentioned in the *Smṛtis*, which, however, recognize the *Gāndharva* form of marriage. It should be pointed out that *Gāndharva* and *Svayaṃvara* are not one and the same; but the independence of the girl in her choice of the groom is implied in both, and perhaps this is why *Svayaṃvara* is not included in the usual list of the eight. Moreover there is provision in Manu for girls to choose their own husbands, if they are not given in marriage by their parents after three years from their attaining puberty.[49] Though *Svayaṃvara* is not mentioned as such in the *Smṛtis,* the father loses his authority over the daughter by not fulfilling his duty of marrying her in proper time. But such girls, on leaving home, are not allowed to take with them any ornaments given by father, mother or brother. If they take them it will be considered as theft.[50]

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[44] *Manu.* VIII. 204.

[45] Ludwig Sternbach, *Bhāratiya Vidyā,* Vol. XII, p. 72.

[46] *Manu.* IX. 98, 100.

[47] *Āp. Dh.* II. 5.11-12; *Gaut. Dh.* IV. p. 15.

[48] *Manu.* III. 23.

[49] *Manu.* IX. 90-91.

In the Buddhist *Jātakas,* the girls, marrying at the mature age, used to choose their own husbands. Princess Kanhā asked her mother to persuade her father to hold an assembly to choose her husband.[51] In the *Kulāvaka Jātaka,* Sujātā, the daughter of the Asura king selects her husband from a great assembly of Asuras.[52] This is evidently a *Svayaṃvara* of the type of the epics.

Caste and Marriage

The different forms of marriage are mentioned in connection with different castes. Baudhāyana is supposed to be one of the earliest *Dharmasūtras,* but among all the *Sūtrakāras* he and Vaśiṣṭha accepted most willingly the inferior forms of marriage. Yet even Baudhāyana recommends *Gāndharva* and *Paiśāca* only for Vaiśyas and Śūdras. Baudhāyana allows considerable liberty to the lower castes in respect of marriage, but he restricts the Brāhmaṇas, and allows them to enter into marriage only according to the first four forms — *Brāhma, Daiva, Ārṣa* and *Prājāpatya* — among which the earlier is preferable to those which follow.

The reason for the leniency allowed to the Vaiśyas and Śūdras is perhaps that they were looked down upon in society, and the standard of social morality did not depend upon them. So they were allowed to marry as they chose. But the Brāhmaṇas, who were supposed to be the religious heads of society, were allowed to marry only according to the first four forms. All the other *Sūtras* agree with Baudhāyana about this rule.

But even in the time of Baudhāyana, the *Gāndharva* marriage is recommended for all the castes, according to the "opinion of some".[53] This means that, despite the strict rules of the law givers, society had to make some provision for love marriage, even for the Brāhmaṇas. There are also numerous references to the acceptance of local customs in the *Mahābhārata.* Bhīṣma was a Kṣatriya, but he had to pay bride-price to Śalya, the king of the Madras, for his sister Mādrī, who was given in marriage to Pāṇḍu, since it was a custom of the Madras.[54]

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[50] *Manu.* IX. 92.

[51] *J. V.* 426-27.

[52] *J. I.* 205-6.

[53] *Baudh. Dh.* I. 11.20.16.

Similarly Ṛcika, the offspring of Bhṛgu, sought the daughter of Gādhi, the king of Kānyakubja, in marriage. But the king said that according to the family custom the purchase price of the bride was a thousand strong horses, each with one black ear. Ṛcika promised him the horses, got them from Varuṇa, and was then given Gādhi's daughter in marriage.[55]

Manu distinguishes these forms of marriage according to their appropriateness for different classes of persons. His opinion on the admissibility of different forms of marriage to different castes is rather confusing. In one place he says that the first six are legal for the Brāhmaṇas, the last four excepting the *Rākṣasa* for the Vaiśyas and Śūdras.[56] In the very next *śloka*, he mentions that the first four are approved in the case of a Brāhmaṇa, while for the Kṣatriyas the only approved form is *Rākṣasa*, and for the Vaiṣyas and Śūdras, the *Āsura* form.[57] In the next *śloka* he mentions that from among the last five, i.e., *Prājāpatya*, *Rākṣasa*, *Āsura*, *Gāndharva* and *Paiśāca*, only the first three are declared lawful. The *Paiśāca* and *Āsura* must never be used.[58] So it seems that, *Āsura* having been prescribed for the Vaiśyas only and *Paiśāca* being disapproved for all, the remaining three, the *Prājāpatya*, *Gāndharva* and *Rākṣasa*, are lawful for Brāhmaṇas.

As these verses are very contradictory the commentaries have tried to reconcile them in their interpretation.

The *Madanapārijāta*[59] adds the following note. The first four are approved for the Brāhmaṇa but the *Rākṣasa* must have been a secondary substitute for them, as it is lawful for the next lower caste i.e., Kṣatriyas. Aparārka[60] tries to explain the verse in the following way. He says that though in the second verse the first four forms are recommended for the Brāhmaṇas, the *Āsura* and *Gāndharva* are neither commended nor forbidden. The same applies to the Kṣatriyas. The *Smṛticandrika*[61] says that though these four are recommended, that does not mean that the other two are forbidden. Perhaps they are not so much approved as the others. The *Smṛtitattva*[62] tries to explain the admissibility of the *Āsura* form of marriage as that when the bride's father receives wealth from the bridegroom, it must be understood to sanction the payment of so much wealth as may be required for the decking of the bride.

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[54] *Mahā. Ādi.* 113.

[55] *Anu.* 4.

[56] *Manu.* III. 23.

[57] *Manu.* III. 24.

[58] *Manu.* III. 25.

[59] *Madanapārijāta*, 154.

[60] *Aparārka*, 91.

The *Vīramitrodaya*[63] quotes the last verse[64] in support of the view that certain forms of marriage are permissible for the Brāhmaṇas under abnormal circumstances.

At the end of this confusing list Manu mentions that the first four forms with libation of water are approved for the Brāhmaṇa, but for the other castes they may be performed *itaretarakāmyaya*, "in consequence of mutual desire of the bride and bridegroom."
This may mean that the *Gāndharva* form of marriage is approved for all castes, or that the castes other than Brāhmaṇas can marry in any form they choose.

Although the commentators attempt to explain away these contradictions by various interpretations all these rules were perhaps not applicable at the same time. *Manu Saṃhitā* is a compilation of all known texts which from the ancient times had been attributed to Manu.[65] The contradictions are therefore easily explained. It is possible that all these rules were practised in society in different times and different regions, and were later combined together in a single text, without any attempt at co-ordinating them.

In the beginning the four inferior forms were presumably disapproved in society. Then gradually they came to be recognized for castes other than Brāhmaṇas. As these lower forms became popular, the *Gāndharva* and *Āsura* were permissible even for the Brāhmaṇas. In certain later times and other regions the *Rākṣasa* was recommended for the Kṣatriyas and *Āsura* for the Vaiśyas and Śūdras.

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[61] *Smṛticandrika Saṃskāra*, pp. 190-231.

[62] *Smṛtitattva*, III, p. 140.

[63] *Vīṛamitrodaya Saṃskāra*, p. 860.

[64] *Manu.* III, 25.

[65] N. C. Sengupta, *Evolution of Law*, p. 15.

In all these stages, the last seems to be of the acceptance of the first six forms, *Brāhma, Daiva, Ārṣa, Prājāpatya, Gāndharva* and *Āsura,* for the Brāhmaṇas, though the last two are not considered as creditable. The *Dharmasūtras* allow more liberty to Brāhmaṇas in this respect than does Manu.

Yājñavalkya[66] mentions the same eight forms of marriage in the following order — *Brāhma, Daiva, Ārṣa, Kāya* (called *Prājāpatya* by Vijñāneśvara), *Āsura, Gāndharva, Rākṣasa* and *Paiśāca,* but does not say anything about the admissibility of these to different castes. To him, they were preferable in that order, and *Paiśāca* was considered the lowest.

Nārada[67] mentions them in the following order — *Brāhma, Prājāpatya, Ārṣa, Daiva, Gāndharva, Āsura, Rākṣasa,* and *Paiśāca.* The first four are lawful, the *Gāndharva* to be common to all castes and the rest three, to be unlawful. Kauṭilya[68] also mentions these in the same order.

According to Kauṭilya the first four are ancient ancestral custom and are valid when approved by the girl's father. In other forms, the sanction of both the father and mother is necessary. The sanction of both the parents may show traces of matriarchy. It is possible that originally the lower forms of marriage were practised in the matriarchal tribes and when they were sanctioned into the Aryan marriage forms the rule of mother's consent still prevailed.

It will be shown later that the love marriage or a type of *Gāndharva* form was common among the early Tamils who, we know, were originally matriarchal tribes.

It seems from the Greek accounts that in the Mauryan period love or *Gāndharva* marriage was quite popular.

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[66] *Yājñ.* I. 58-61.

[67] *Nārada,* XII. 40-44.

[68] *Kaut.* III. ch. 2.

Diodorus[69] says that it was the ancient law among the Indians that when young men and maidens decided to marry, they did not marry according to the judgement of their parents but by mutual consent. Strabo[70] also says that among Kathaians the husband and wife chose each other. But as these decisions were made in immature age, mistakes of judgement were of frequent occurrence; and the wives became repentent and fell in love with other men. At last when they wanted to leave their husbands, they got rid of them by poison. This he refers to as of frequent occurrence in the past. In fact this is a fanciful explanation of the origin of *Satī* and is not reliable. Moreover it refers to one tribe in the north west and not to India as a whole. It is evident that there were some instances of marriage by mutual consent but the general opinion presumably was not in favour of this practice and it was believed that young people were liable to commit mistakes when they chose for themselves. This practice of marriage by mutual consent, however, is not mentioned by Megasthenes. Timmer[71] thinks that perhaps this form of marriage was not popular in the society in which he moved, probably Brāhmaṇical. But we find frequent examples of this type of marriage in the epics, which represent different classes of society, especially of Kṣatriyas.

Another form of marriage was also referred to by the Greek writers, i.e. marriage by purchase. It is stated that a woman was very much honoured who received from her lover the present of an elephant.[72]

The Greek account mentions a form similar to the *Ārṣa*. Strabo[73] says that in India some wives are purchased from their parents in exchange for a yoke of oxen. In the *Dharmasūtras* this form of marriage is not considered to be a purchase.

We find figurative references to some form of marriage in the inscriptions of the Gupta period. The Eran stone inscription[74] of Samudra Gupta describes how he "married a virtuous and faithful wife (Dattādevī) whose dower (*dattaśulka*) was provided by his manliness and prowess. The Udayagiri cave inscription[75] of Candragupta II mentions marriage by purchase. It reads as follows :—"bought with money of (whose) prowess, (the earth), in which (all others) princes are humiliated by the slavery (imposed on them by him)."

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[69] *Diodorus*, XIX. 30.

[70] *Strabo*, XV. 30.

[71] Timmer, *Megasthenes en de Indische maatschappij*, p. 268 ff.

[72] *Strabo*, XV. 43.

[73] *Strabo*, XV. 54.

The practice of giving of a dowry at that time is clear from the Aphsad stone inscription of Ādityasena[76] of the family of the Guptas of Magadha. Here it says that while Dāmodaragupta was king he gave away in marriage a hundred daughters of virtuous Brāhmaṇas, endowed with many ornaments and with youth and dowered with *agrahāra* grants.

In the works of Kālidasa also we find reference to different types of marriage prevailing in Gupta times. The *Prājāpatya*[77] form is described by Kālidāsa in detail. In this form of marriage the father of the bride adorned his daughter with ornaments and gave her away to the bridegroom after the completion of the necessary rites as is enjoined by the codes of Manu.

The *Gāndharva* form is also described in detail in Śakuntalā. But Upādhyāya[78] rightly says that Hindu rules of matrimony do not in fact approve explicitly of courtship. This is why Kālidāsa says: "a discreet daughter, waiting for the consent of her father, in the event of her marriage does not rush to contract a marital agreement of her own free will.[79] Again in Śakuntalā Kālidāsa says: "a union, especially when in private, should be formed after careful examination. Friendship towards those whose hearts are unknown, thus turns into hostility.[80]

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[74] Fleet *Corpus Indicarum,* Vol. 3 (2), p. 21.

[75] Fleet *Corpus Indicarum,* Vol. 3 (6), p. 35.

[76] Fleet *Corpus Inscriptional Indicarum,* Vol. 3 (42), p. 206, text p. 203.

[77] *Kumārasmbhava,* VI. p. 84.

[78] Upādhyāya, *India in Kālidāsa,* p. 181.

[79] *Raghu,* V. 38.

[80] *Śaku.* V. 24.

The *Āsura* form of marriage is perhaps indirectly mention ed by Kālidāsa in the expression *Duhitṛśulkasaṃsthāya*,[8 i.e. "by the condition of the *śulka* or bride money of th daughter." *Śulka* could also mean dowry.

Origin of the Lower Forms of Marriage

We have already seen that there are very few references i the *Ṛg-Veda* to marriage by capture or purchase, or t marriage resulting from love. These were merely different method of acquiring wives, and were not accepted as forms of marriage until the time of the *Dharmasūtras*. These different forms of marriage seem to be of non-Aryan origin. Even today we find that such marriages are practised in some form or other by many of the primitive tribes of India.

Among the Godavars of Vishakhapattam the bridegroom puts an iron ring on the arm of the bride and drags her away with him towards his home. The bride's party try to prevent him and mock fight ensues between them. After both parties are tired, the bride is led away to the bridegroom's house with the beating of drums.[82] Even now, in some parts of India a Hindu bride puts on her left wrist an iron bracelet, which she never removes unless she becomes a widow. The iron ring of the Godavar has the same significance. Both customs seem to be reminiscent of the ancient practice of marriage by capture, and the iron ring must have been originally the symbol of the bride being kept in chains.

Among a number of social groups in Orissa and the Tamil land there is a custom called the stealing frolic. On the last night but one, before the actual ceremony, the bridegroom goes to the house of the bride and offers an oblation to the fire. When he comes out, a silver cup with a cake in it is placed on the gateway that leads out of the house. The relations of the bride try to obstruct him, but he has to escape. The nuptial ceremony comes immediately after this "stealing frolic". The custom must be a sym-

[81] *Raghu*, XI. p. 38.

[82] G. Ramdas, Godabar Marriage — *Man in India*, Vol. XI. p. 167.

bolic survival of the ancient practice of abducting the girl from her home.

Marriage by purchase is followed by many of the Tibetan tribes, the Bhuiyas of Orissa and a number of Chittagong hill tribes.[83]

Marriage by purchase is found among many of the aboriginal tribes of India. Among the Morans of Assam a price between Rs. 20 and Rs. 100 was paid to the bride's parents and a pearl was given to both of them and to other relatives of the girl. Among the Kunnuvans, a hill tribe of the Patnis in South India, the bride price was fixed at Rs. 10 in all cases, irrespective of the parties being rich or poor.[84]

Marriage by purchase was also prevalent among many civilized people. In China a price amounting to 25 to 40 Chinese dollars was given to the parents of the bride by the father of the bridegroom. In Japan also, marriage by purchase was prevalent in more than one branch of the Semites.[85] In Babylonia and among the ancient Arabs a bride price was paid by the bridegroom. This bride price has survived in Muhammadan law.[86] The lower forms of Hindu marriage must thus have been borrowed from the pre-Aryans and non-Aryans, with whom the Aryans came into intimate contact both in enmity and friendship. Un-Aryan marriage forms and customs came therefore to be gradually integrated into and adopted by Aryan society. The stories of *Mahābhārata* furnish many examples of such contacts and of the sources of such inferior marriages.

That the Aryan warriors must often have found marriage by capture to be a suitable and acceptable form is shown by the various stories of *Mahābhārata.* The capture of the three daughters of the king of Kāśī by Bhiṣma is one of the most important examples of this form of marriage among the Kṣatriyas.[87] Arjuna fell in love with

[83] Westermarck, *H. H. M.*, Vol. II, p. 244.
[84] Westermarck, *H. H. M.*, Vol. II, p. 381.
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[87] *Ādi.* 102.

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[86] Westermarck, *H. H. M.*, Vol. II, p. 407.

[87] *Ādi.* 102.

Subhadrā, Kṛṣṇa's sister, when he was living in exile, supposedly in a state of *brahmacarya*. Arjuna did not however wait for her *svayaṃvara*, but carried her away when she was coming back after offering worship to the mountain Raivataka.[88]

The *Gāndharva* or love marriage probably in part grew spontaneously in society, and in part was borrowed from non-Aryan peoples. The marriage of Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā is one of the most important traditional examples of the *Gāndharva* form. When Duṣyanta was hunting he saw Śakuntalā in the hermitage of theṚṣi Kanva, fell in love with her, and induced her to accept him in the *Gāndharva* form of marriage.[89]

From the earliest Tamil literature[90] which probably refers to the early centuries of the Christian era, we get references to union by love. The characteristics of this poetry are that the Sanskrit words are very little used in it, and that the customs referred to are generally pure Tamil ones. The most important poems for our purposes belong to the class *Kuriñji* i.e. those that deal with pre-nuptial love, characteristic of the hill-country. Poems of the *Mullai* class, referring to the wooded region, deal with the intense longing caused by the temporary separation of the lovers. There are poems describing the mother's lament when her daughter eloped with her lover.[91]
The Tamil poems suggest that pre-nuptial love was very common indeed, especially among the hill people and inhabitants of outlying districts. This would lead us to infer that acceptance of *Gāndharva* marriage in Aryan society was at least partly due to the absorption of non-Aryan element.

We know that the *Āsura* or marriage by purchase was prevalent among the Assyrians, the Jews and other Semitic races.[92] Like the *Dharmasūtras* the *Mahābhārata* condemns it on principle but seems to allow it in practice.

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[88] *Ādi.* 221-222.
[89] *Ādi.* 73.
[90] P. T. Srinivas Iyangar, *History of the Tamils*, pp. 162-171
[91] P. T. Srinivas Iyangar, *History of the Tamils* p. 169
[92] Hastings, *E. R. E.*, Vol. VIII. p. 470.

Much mixture of culture and races had been taking place at that time and different forms of marriage unknown to the Vedic Aryans were gradually being assimilated along with other rites, rituals and social customs. The *Paiśāca* marriage never received the whole hearted sanction of the *Dharmasūtras*. It is very difficult to trace its origin. The name *Paiśāca* is possibly given to this form of marriage because of its crudity. In some of the African tribes, a marriage does not become definite until a child is born, in other cases sexual relations which lead to pregnancy or child-birth make marriage obligatory or render the seducer liable to punishment,[93] if he does not marry the woman.

According to Ludwig Sternbach[94] the lower forms of marriage, *Rākṣasa* and *Paiśāca*, are only relics in the *Dharmasūtras* of certain forms of marriage, existing in primitive times. He supports his argument by referring to the *Dharmasūtras*, which consider these acts as crimes but still allow them. According to him, these rules are archaic, as the forcible abduction was only a sham abduction and the robbery became legalized through a solemn act, that is the wedding ceremony.

But this does not seem to be the correct explanation. It seems more probable that the *Brāhma* was the only legal form of marriage among all the branches of Aryan people before they entered India and the other inferior forms of marriage were recognised later by Āryan society.

The *Brāhma* form, the ideal of Hindu marriage, is purely religious. Comparing it with the early marriage customs of other branches of Indo-European races we find much the same ideas. From this we can conclude that religious marriage, resulting in spiritual relationship, was common among the original Indo-Europeans before they were divided.

The Dharmasūtra Period

In the lower forms of marriage no ceremonies were performed, or at least Manu does not mention them. But he states elsewhere that the nuptial marriage *mantras* are to be recited only by brides who have not lost their virginity.[95] The commentators however recommend the recitation even in the lower forms of marriage. Govindarāja and Nārāyaṇa prescribe offering and wedding ceremonies to be performed in the case of the *Gāndharva, Rākṣasa* and *Paiśāca* forms, although they declare that no Vedic *mantras* should be recited at these weddings. The restriction seems to be based on Manu's dictum. But Medhātithi[96] says that as regards the *Paiśāca* form, there is a difference of opinion. Some held that wedding with recitation of *mantras* was permissible in it. In support, Medhātithi cites the case of Kuntī, married to Pāṇdu after her son's birth. Medhātithi thinks that these sacramental rites serve two purposes—first to give the wife the right to share in the religious acts of her husband, and secondly to avoid the sin of repeating the act of having intercourse with a maiden. The *Arthaśāstra*[97] mentions that the first four forms, are called *dharmavivāha* or marriage completed by sacrament. In them, Kauṭilya says, the father alone is the authority. The others are not accompanied by sacred rites, and only became lawful when both father and mother agree to the proposal.

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[93] Westermarck, *R. B. M.*, Vol. I. p. 287.

[94] Ludwig Sternbach, The Rākṣasa Vivāha and Paiśāca Vivāha : in *N. I. A.*, 1943, Vol. VI. pp. 182-88.

When however, the lower forms of marriage became popular the higher castes also adopted them. As a result, to sanctify these unions the sacred rite before the fire was recommended. Medhātithi says that these different forms are just the means of acquiring wives. The marriage is complete only after the sacrament is performed.[98]

Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasūtra*[99] mentions the necessity of fire. In marriage by capture and other forms it is necessary for the bridegroom to procure some fire for performing the sacrament to legalize the union.

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[95] *Manu.* VIII. p. 226.

[96] *Medh. on Manu.* III. p. 34.

[97] *Kaut.* III. II. 152.

[98] *Medh. on Manu.* III. p. 34.

[99] *Kām.* III. p. 5.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY HINDU MARRIAGE

Age of Marriage

In the *Ṛg-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda* we find no mention of child marriage. On the other hand there are clear indications that girls were married at a mature age, and there are references to spinsters growing old in their father's house.[1]

From the Vedic marriage rituals of the *Gṛhyasūtras* we know that normally adult girls and young men were married. In some of the *Gṛhyasūtras*, however, there are references to child marriage. It is suggested that a *nagnikā* should be chosen as a bride.[2] The commentators give different connotations of *nagnikā*. Matṛdatta on Hiraṇyakeśin says that *nagnikā* refers to a woman who is fit to welcome her husband in privacy immediately after her marriage. Altekar[3] therefore concludes that when child marriage came into practice the meaning of the term was changed and it was maintained that it denotes a little girl, for whom a complete clothing was not necessary. -Aṣṭāvakra, the commentator on *Mānava Gṛhyasūtra*[4] says that the *nagnikā* is the girl who has not yet experienced the impulses and emotions of youth, or one who looks pretty even without clothes. The *Gṛhyasaṃgraha*[5] explains *nagnikā* as one who has not yet reached puberty. There is no doubt that *nagnikā* is mentioned in this sense in the later period. *Vaśiṣṭha Dharmasūtra*[6] says that the father should give away his daughter in marriage while she is still a *nagnikā* for fear of her attaining puberty before marriage. This suggests that *nagnikā* means a girl who had not yet attained puberty. But this may not have been the original meaning of *nagnikā* because the *Hiraṇyakeśin Gṛhyasūtra*[7] mentions that the girl should be both a *nagnikā* and a virgin. If *nagnikā* meant a girl who had not yet attained puberty mention of virginity would be unnecessary.

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[1] *R. V.* I., 117, p. 7.

[2] *Hir. Gṛ.* I.19.2., *Gobh. Gṛ.*, III.4.6.

[3] Altekar, *P. W. H. C.*, p. 52.

[4] *Mān. Gṛ.* I.7.8.

[5] *Gṛhyasaṃgraha* quoted in *Gobhila comm.*, III.4.6.

[6] *Vaś. Dh.* 17.70.

However Matṛdatta's alternative explanation is unconvincing. Let us therefore provisionally accept the fact that child marriage was known at the time of the three *Sūtras* which use the term *nagnikā*. These *Gṛhyasūtras* were composed at different periods, and those of Gobhila, Mānava and Hiraṇyakeśin appear to be among the latest.

Evidently by this time, later marriages, though still practised, had fallen into discredit among many of the stricter Brāhmaṇas. But Mātṛdatta's attempt to find an alternative meaning for the word *nagnikā* shows that even the Brāhmaṇas had misgivings about the child marriage in later period. The marriage of grown up girls was still the general practice at the time of the *Gṛhyasūtras,* since all recommend the consummation or the rite called *Cathurthīkarma* on the fourth day of marriage; though Āśvalāyana and others mention the period of chastity as three days, twelve days, six months or even one year.[8]

That a period of a year should elapse between the marriage ceremony and the consummation does not prove the existence of child marriage, for it is explicitly stated that longer period of chastity was observed only to ensure the birth of noble offspring. Gobhila gives as the "opinion of some" the instruction of three nights' chastity, but himself mentions the consummation only after the third monthly illness.[9]

This might refer to child marriage because Gobhila in another place recommends a *nagnikā* to be chosen. But it might simply imply that a longer period was advisable for better offspring. Moreover, the *mantras* that the bride has to recite during the marriage ceremony presuppose her mature mind and body and the power of understanding their significance.

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[7] *Hir. Gṛ.* I.19.2.

[8] *Āśv. Gṛ.* I.8.10-11.

[9] *Gobh. Gṛ.* 5.7.

The Indian medical authorities recommend that a 21 year old boy should marry a girl of 16. Then their son will be strong and will procreate strong descendants. But if the father is 25 years old and the mother is less than 16 the embryo dies in the mother's womb and even if it lives, it becomes sickly.[10]

In the *Dharmasūtra* period it appears that child marriage was very common. Different *Dharmasūtras*[11] recommend that a girl should be given in marriage before she attains puberty. Baudhāyana[12] goes to the extreme in saying that the girl should be given even to a man who is destitute of good qualities rather than be kept at her father's house after she has attained puberty. In the *Pañcatantra*[13] we find the mention of this. In the tale of the mouse-maiden who is to wed a mouse, the father gets anxious about the daughter when she has reached the age of twelve, because it would be considered a sin on his part if the daughter were to attain puberty in her father's house.

In the *Smṛtis* a further lowering of the age of the bride is noticed. The later the law books, the earlier they prescribe the age of marriage of girls.

Manu[14] says that a man aged 30 years should marry a girl of 8 years of age. Medhātithi and Kullūka comment that this verse is not intended to lay down any hard and fast rule, but merely to suggest suitable ages. A man should marry earlier if he were to finish his studies. After studentship the ceremony of *Samāvartana* is performed before marriage. The period of studentship is indefinite, as it commences with the ceremony of the sacred thread (*upanayana*) and may last for 36 years or half of the time, or for a quarter, or until the student has perfectly learnt the Vedas. But the fact that the limiting age for girls prescribed here is 12, shows that even if a man marries late in his life, his bride should not exceed 12.

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[10] Jolly, *M. G. I. P.* III. 10. p. 49.
[11] *Gaut. Dh.* XVIII. 20-23; *Vaś. Dh.* XVII. 67; *Baudh. Dh.* IV.I.I.
[12] *Baudh. Dh.* IV.I. 11.
[13] *Pañcatantra*, III.9.
[14] *Manu*. IX.94.

But Manu's provision elsewhere sounds quite rational. He says that after reaching puberty, a girl should wait for three years for her father to get her married; after that time she has the right to choose her own husband.[15] The girl should be given in marriage to a distinguished and handsome suitor of equal caste, even when she has not attained the proper age. But if no man with good qualities is found, the maiden should rather stop in the father's house until death than be given to a man destitute of good qualities. This is contrary to the statement of Baudhāyana.

Ehrenfels thinks that the growing popularity of child marriage was due to the struggle between the patriarchal order of the invaders and the matriarchal order of the indigenous Indian civilization. He infers that infant marriage was introduced as a means against mother right, because it never appeared in the mother-right area of the Malabar coast. We know that in the matriarchal communities of India young girls enjoyed freedom and were allowed to have many husbands at the same time.[16] The invading nomadic Aryan herdsmen had to overcome therefore strong opposition from indigenous peoples, on whom the typical nomadic herdsmen's patriarchal ideals of chastity, subordination and obedience of women were being imposed. Moreover the rule of patrilocal marriage must have been revolting to a girl who was brought up in a tradition in which she owed obedience to her mother only. But child-marriage was perhaps an attempt to overcome matriarchal opposition.

If the custom was due to the conflict of patriarchy and matriarchy it must have been a question rather of the developed patriarchal culture of early Hinduism than of that of the Aryans of the *Ṛg-Veda*. A few centuries ago child marriage was not unusual even in Europe.[17] In the

[15] *Manu*, IX.90 cf. *Baudh. Dh.* IX.1.12; *Vaś. Dh.* XVII.67 but *Gaut. Dh.* mentions three monthly periods instead of three years.

[16] Ehrenfels, *Mother-right in India* pp. 58-65, among Nayars.

[17] Winternitz, *D.F.B.* Vol. XL. p. 33.

16th and 17th century many little children of two or three, not to speak of boys and girls of nine to eleven, were betrothed by priests in the chapels and churches. The marriage was consummated after puberty, that is when the girl was 12 and the boy 14 years old. The parents wanted to give their daughters and sons in marriage at an early age mainly because of economic conditions. In India early marriages became prevalent owing to various circumstances. When women lost their high position in society, they were looked upon as a burden and were disposed of as early as possible.

The growth of child marriage may be due to a reaction on the part of the Aryans to non-Aryan lax customs of which they disapproved. Even now we find pre-marital promiscuity among some aborigines of India. Many such promiscuous primitive tribes living around the Aryan settlements, may have forced the Aryans to take to child-marriage.

Polygamy

From the marriage-ceremony and from the various references to home-life, it is evident that monogamy generally prevailed. But it is also clear that polygamy was also practised by the ruling classes. We find reference to two kinds of wives of the king in the *Ṛg-Veda—Mahiṣī*[18] and the *Parivṛkti.*[19] There are other references to kings or gods having more than one wife in the *Ṛg-Veda.*[20]

One verse[21] describes the rivalry between different wives in the song of exultation by Śacī over her rivals. Wilson thinks that this hymn is metaphorically the praise of Indra's glorious acts as Śacī means also an act or exploit. But even accepting the metaphorical interpretation, the figure of speech used by the poet certainly implies polygamy. Cases of polygamy amongst *ṛṣis*, princes, and non-Aryan chiefs are often found in the *Ṛg-Veda.* The circumstances of conquest and settlement and consequent prosperity of the priesthood must have made polygamy more common. Thus in the *Ṛg-Veda*[22] female slaves were presented to the *ṛṣis* by the patron princes. King Trasadasyu gave fifty of them as *vadhus* to Śobhari Kānva. But even though polygamy existed in *Ṛg-Vedic* society there is no evidence that it was generally practised; if it existed at all in the early Vedic period it was confined to a very small section of people, presumably chiefs. But there are a few references to polygamy even among ordinary householders in the later hymns. There is a whole hymn in the *Ṛg-Veda* which refers to a jealous wife, performing a spell over her rival with the help of a plant.

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[18] *R. V.* V.2.2; 37.3.

[19] *R. V.* X.102.11.

[20] *R. V.* VII.18.2.

[21] *R. V.* X.159.

> इमां खनाम्योषधिं वीरुधं वलवत्तमाम् ।
> यया सपत्नीं बाधते यया संविन्दते पतिम् । (ऋ. १०·१४५·१)
> उत्तानपर्णे सुभगे देवजुते सहस्वति ।
> सपत्निं मे पराधम पतिं मे केवलं कुरु ॥ (ऋ. १·१४५·२)

"I dig this well-grown, most potent herb by which (one) oppresses the rival wife, by which one secures to herself her husband."

"O herb, with upturned leaves, auspicious, sent by the gods, powerful, blow away my rival and make my husband mine alone."

A man with two wives is also mentioned in the *Ṛg-Veda*. It is very doubtful whether these few references are enough evidence for the existence of polygamy as a regular custom among the ordinary people. Moreover in style these verses are more akin to later Sanskrit than to Vedic.

Ṛg-Vedic hymn X.145 was evidently not originally intended for use in the Vedic ritual, but is rather an incantation, and is more akin to *Atharva-Veda* in spirit. The hymn is appreciably later than the main body of the Ṛg-Veda. Moreover the whole of Book X of *Ṛg-Veda* is much later than the rest of the collection. So it can be assumed that polygamy became more and more common in society in the later Vedic period.

Change of economic condition may have been a cause of the growth of polygamy among the ordinary people. In the earlier period the average Vedic householder appears to have depended mainly on his own exertions. He worked on his field and supplied the family requirements. Life was simple. In the later period conquest brought more wealth and thereby society was changed. Wealth came to be accumulated in the hands of a few. So polygamy came to be introduced in the community as a result of improvement of their economic condition. But even if polygamy existed in *Ṛg-Vedic* society there is no evidence that it was general. Monogamy was evidently approved.

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[22] *R. V.* VIII.19.36.

Polygamy was certainly prevalent at the time of the *Atharva-Veda,* and an entire hymn[23] is devoted to a spell by which a wife tries to get rid of her rival. In spite of polygamy, the *Atharva-Veda* hymn referring to marriage rituals shows that monogamy was the ideal and that constancy of conjugal affection was always sought for. The *Atharva-Veda* mentions later a charm for both the bride and the bridegroom, for their mutual love:—

अक्ष्वौ नौ मघुसंकाशे अनीकं नौ समञ्जानम् ।
अन्तःकृणुष्व माम् हृदि मनइन् नौ सुहासती ।। (अ. ५·७·३६)

"Our glances are sweet, our faces are as smooth as balm. Put me within your heart, may there be one spirit in both our hearts."

The wedded pair were compared to the *Cakravāka,* the bird and his mate who are regarded as an emblem of conjugal love and constancy.

इहेमाविंद्र सं नुद चक्रवाकेव दंपती ।
प्रजयैनौ स्वस्तकौ विश्वमायुर्व्यंऽश्नुताम् ।। (अ. १४·२·६४)

"O Indra, join the couple like the *cakravāka* and his mate. Let them with their children live out all their life in their happy home."

It is clear therefore that though polygamy was prevalent in the age of the *Atharva-Veda,* if not in that of the *Ṛg-Veda,* monogamy was still the general practice, as indeed it was in India at all times. There are very few references to polygamy in the *Gṛhyasūtras.*

[23] *A. V.* I.IV.

The *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra* only,[24] in sanctioning the *anuloma* system of intercaste marriage, says that three wives are allowed to a Brāhmaṇa, each from the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya classes in order. Two wives are allowed to a Kṣatriya namely a Kṣatriya and a Vaiśya, and one to a Vaiśya, who must be of the Vaiśya class. In addition a Śūdra wife is allowed to a man of the higher classes, but she is to be married without the Vedic mantras. The rules mentioned above seem evidently somewhat artificial, and though they may be broadly based on practices prevailing at the time, we can not believe that Brāhmaṇas regularly took second and third wives from the classes in that descending order. There are certain rituals mentioned in the *Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra*[25] to be performed by the wife for averting the evil of co-wives. Moreover there are a few references where wives are referred to in the plural and this some scholars think an evidence of polygamy.[26]

But in spite of a few references the overall tenor of the *Sūtras* shows that monogamy was the general practice and that constancy of conjugal affection was always a great virtue.

According to the Buddhist books, the people were no doubt generally monogamous. But there was no rule against polygamy or direct condemnation of it. It was prevalent among kings, nobles and merchants.

In *Mahāpadma Jātaka*[27], the king is said to have 16 wives. In a *Daśaratha Jātaka*[28], king had 16,000 wives. The reason for taking a second wife seemed to be barrenness of the first. The *Dhammapada* commentary, in repeating a story in the Vinaya[29], appears to suggest that a husband might honourably take a second wife if the first proved barren, but that in normal circumstances polygamy was looked down as improper.

The *Anguttara Nikaya*[30] gives evidence of polygamous marriage and the voluntary transfer of wives to other husbands. Here it is said that the householder Ugga of Vesali, before becoming a Buddhist lay devotee, called his four young wives together and declared to them that he was resolved to embrace the five rules of Buddhism, presumably interpreting them as involving complete celebacy. He is reported as saying : "Who wishes may enjoy the wealth of this place, or may do deeds of merit, or may go to her own relations and family – or is there some man you desire to whom I may give you ?" The eldest wife asked to be given to a certain man, whereupon Ugga summoned him and handed his wife to him, pouring out a libation of water (according to the commentary) on the hands of the couple evidently as a sort of informal marriage rite, in order to solemnize the occasion. The other three wives apparently remained loyal to their husband.

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[24] *Pār. Gṛ.* I.4.8.11.

[25] *Āp. Gṛ.* III.9.

[26] *A. V.* XIV.2.52., Sarkar, *S.A.E.S.*, p. 88.

[27] *J.* 472.

[28] Daśaratha Jātaka. IV.125

[29] V.P.V.N. 79.

[30] *P. T. S.* VIII : iii : 21.

The light thrown by this story on marital relations in eastern India in the pre-Mauryan period is considerable. Ugga is a confirmed polygamist, but his wives have a great deal of freedom – otherwise the eldest would hardly have been able to develop so close a friendship with another man as to desire him in marriage. Though a wealthy householder, Ugga cannot have married his wives by Brahmanical rites, in which case the transfer of one of them to another husband would have been unthinkable. We can only interpret the story as further evidence of the survival of freer non-Aryan customs in the region. The text, it should be noted, much praises Ugga for his act of renunciation, but in no way condemns the eldest wife.

Polyandry

Polyandry was not practised in the *Ṛg-Vedic* age. But Dr. Sarkar tries to find traces of polyandry from the *Ṛg-Vedic* verses[31], where a maiden was referred to in connection with "husbands". That cannot be enough proof of polyandry.

The plural may probably be used here honorifically although a definite instance of polyandry was of Draupadī, from the *Mahābhārata*.

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[31] Sarkar, *S. A. E. S.*, p. 80, *R. V.* X.85.37.38.

There is only one reference to polyandry in the *Jātakas*[32]. Princes Kaṇhā, in the *svayaṃvara* chose the five Pāṇḍavas as her husbands. She was allowed to have five men in spite of her father's vexation. But this is surely the trait of an anterior period and only the remnant of epic story of Draupadī's marriage with the Pāṇḍava brothers.

According to Meyer[33] polyandry must have been a non-Aryan practice and Pāṇḍavas were certainly non-Aryans. They may have belonged to some aboriginal tribes which dwelt in India, such as still dwell in India or on its boundaries. Dr. Meyer thinks that the Kauravas were the original heroes and the Pāṇḍavas were certainly not their cousins. He finds confirmation of his statement in the fact that when the five brothers tell Draupadī's father of their intentions, he feels very much shocked and wounded and protests against what is contradictory to all worldly customs, and also to the prescription of the Vedas. Yudhiṣṭhira however replies, "we take the path which our forefathers followed one after the other." Prof. Jolly[34] thinks that it cannot be proved that polyandry of ancient times was confined to non-Aryan tribes alone. All that can be suggested, in his opinion, is that "Brāhmaṇas were jealously antagonistic to it". He refers to the well known law of Manu[35] as a proof of polyandry, where it is stated that the son of several brothers may be regarded as the common son of all. This may have some reference to the custom of group marriage prevalent in some ancient societies.

Intercaste Marriage

At the time of *Ṛg-Veda,* we do not find strict rules dividing the different castes. We find that the four *varṇas* were recognized, but the rules about intermarriage with different *varṇas* or taking food outside the *varṇa* were not so rigid as they later were. We find several examples of intercaste marriages from the Vedic literature. In the *Ṛg-Veda*[36] we get the reference of the Brāhmaṇa sage *Śvāvāśva* marrying the Kṣhatriya daughter of Rathaviti Darbhya. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[37] we get the story of the sage Śyavana, who was a descendent of Bhṛgu, marrying the daughter of king Śaryāta. From another verse of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[38] we learn that a king was allowed to marry a Vaisya woman but her son would not be entitled to the Vedic coronation ceremony.

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[32] *Kuṇala Jātaka, J.* V. pp. 426-7.

[33] Meyer, *S. L. A.* I. Vol. II. p. 108.

[34] Jolly, *H. L. C.* p. 104.

[35] *Manu.* IX. 182.

Coming to the *Gṛhyasūtras*[39] we find that some of them do not mention anything about the *varṇa* of the bride, while others[40] prescribe that one should marry a girl of the same *varṇa.*

The necessity of equality of birth is already mentioned in the *Gṛhyasūtras.* In the *Dharmasūtra* and *Smṛti* period it is more emphasized. As the rule became more and more rigid as time went on, many conflicting opinions were expressed by the law-givers.

Baudhāyaṇa,[41] and Vaśiṣṭha,[42] say that a Brāhmaṇa is allowed to marry one wife from his own caste and another three from the three lower classes. Similarly Kṣatriyas are allowed to marry three wives, from Vaiśyas two and Śūdras one. Viṣṇu[43] says that among these wives the ceremony of *Pāṇigrahaṇa* should be performed only with the wife of his own caste. We have already pointed out that the ceremony of *Pāṇigrahaṇa* symbolizes the solemn contract by which the wife becomes the *dharmapatnī* or equal partner of the husband. So it seems quite clear that, though intercaste marriages were allowed according to these *Sūtras,* they were surely not approved of and the wives of lower castes did not hold the same dignified position as the wives of the same caste. This is supported by the statement of the same *Dharmasūtras* and *Smṛtis,* where these intercaste marriages are disapproved. Baudhāyana,[44] while discussing the penances for different sins, mentions the cohabiting with a Śūdra woman as one of them and the punishment is mentioned as "seven suppressions of breath daily for seven days." Similarly, Āpastamba[45] prescribes the penances of bathing and sprinkling oneself with water and reciting the seven verses addressed to Varuṇa, in the case of sins of different kinds, one of which is connection with Śūdra women. Viṣṇu[46] says that a union of a "twice-born" man with a Śūdra wife can never produce religious merit; it is only from carnal desire that he marries the woman of lower caste, being blinded by lust. Those who marry women of lowest caste, degrade their families and progeny to the state of Śūdras; the gods and manes and guests will not eat the offering from the hands of such a wife and her husband will not go to heaven.

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[36] *R. V.* V.61.

[37] *Śat. Br.* IV.1.5.

[38] *Śat. Br.* XIII.2.9.8.

[39] *Āśv. Āp.*

[40] *Mān. Gṛ.* I.7.8; *Hir. Gṛ.* I.19.2.

[41] *Baudh. Dh.* I.8.16.2-5.

[42] *Vaś. Dh.* I.24-25.

[43] *Viṣṇu.* XXIV.5.

Vaśiṣṭha[47] allows the Brāhmaṇa to marry even a Śūdra wife, the rite to be gone through, without the recitation of the sacred texts. He advises him not to act thus, because that will lead to the degradation of his family and, after death, the loss of heaven.

Although the marriage of Brāhmaṇa to a Śūdra woman was permitted, it was never approved. The law-givers are more tolerant towards the marriage of Kṣatriya women with Brāhmaṇas and generally towards mixed marriages where the woman is only a step lower than the man. Thus Viṣṇu[48] says that on failure to find a wife from his own caste, the husband may perform the religious duties with the one belonging to the caste next below his own; so also in cases of distress, when the wife who is equal in caste to him happens to be absent or when she has met with calamity; but never with a Śūdra wife. Moreover, there are stray references to the general attitude towards the marriage with Śūdra women in the *Dharmasūtras*. Āpastamba[49] says that the food must not be eaten of a Brāhmaṇa whose wife is a Śūdra. Gautama[50] forbids the Brāhmaṇa whose wife is a Śūdra, being fed at the time of post-funeral oblation. In Manu[51] we find contradictions in admitting the validity of such a marriage. While discussing intercaste marriage, Manu says that a Śūdra woman alone can be the wife of a Śūdra, she and a Vaiśya woman can be the wives of a Vaiśya; Kṣatriyas can have three wives, namely Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra and Brāhmaṇa those three wives and besides one from his own caste.

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[44] *Baudh. Dh.* IV.1.5.

[45] *Āp. Dh.* I.26.7.

[46] *Viṣṇu.* XXVI.5-7.

[47] *Vaś. Dh.* I.2-27.

[48] *Viṣṇu.* XXVI.3.

[49] *Āp. Dh.* I.16.X.18.33.

Immediately, in the next *śloka* however he declares that "a Śūdra woman is not mentioned even in any story as the wife of a Brāhmaṇa or of a Kṣatriya, though they lived in distress."[52] In the next verse,[53] he says that the "twice born" men who marry Śūdra wives are responsible for degrading their family and children. Next, he quotes the different authorities regarding such a marriage and mentions that the person so married becomes outcaste in this way according to Atri, he who weds a Śūdra woman, immediately becomes an outcaste; according to Śaunaka, on the birth of a son, and according to Bhṛgu, only after a male offspring is born from a Śūdra wife. Sacrifices and offerings should never be offered to the gods and manes, with the assistance of a Śūdra wife.[54] This verse is explained by different authorities in different ways. Medhātithi, Govindarāja, Nandana and Rāghavānanda interpret it in the following way. According to Nārayana's explanation, the translation will be as follows: "A Śudra man of family of Atri who weds a Śūdra woman becomes an outcaste; on one of the race of Utathya's son, on the birth of a son; and one of Śaunaka's of Bhṛgu's race, by having no other than Śūdra offspring."[55]

Aparārka,[56] commenting on the first *śloka*, says that this type of marriage is permissible only in the people moved by lust, and not for those who are righteous. Madanapārijāta[57] mentions that this prohibition refers only to the first marriage and not at the time when no girl of the same caste is found. Aparārka[58] says that this prohibition also applies to Vaiśyas, though that is not specifically mentioned in the verse.

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[50] *Gaut. Dh.* XV.18. cf. *Manu.* III.156.

[51] *Manu.* III. 13.

[52] *Manu.* III.14.

[53] *Manu.* III.15.

[54] *Manu.* III.16-17.

Śūdra vedi pataty atrer utathya tanavasya ca
Saunakasya sutotpattya tadatya taya Bhṛgoḥ.

[55] translated by Bühler.

[56] *Aparārka*, p. 88.

From all these opinions, it is quite clear that the Brāhmaṇa's marriage with Śūdras was legal at the time of Manu but was not very much approved.

Yājñavalkya[59] says that though marriage of a Brāhmaṇa with a Śūdra woman is legal, it is not approved by him because a man is born himself in his son.

Inheritance of Sons of Intercaste Marriages

It seems from the opinion of different *Dharmasūtras* that the sons of such mixed marriages, especially with Kṣatriya and Vaiśya, get more or less the same share of inheritance as that of the sons of equal caste. The son of a Brāhmaṇa by a Kṣatriya wife, if he is the eldest and endowed with good qualities, should share equally with the younger brother born of a Brāhmaṇa mother. But he shall not be entitled to receive the additional share of the eldest son, which consists of the twelfth part of the estate, a male and a female animal with "one row of front teeth" such as cows, a carriage yoked with animals that have "two rows of front teeth", and a bull.[60] As regards the sons of a Śūdra wife of a Brāhmaṇa, Gautama prescribes only the provision of maintenance if the father dies without any other issues,[61] and if moreover the son has been obedient.

According to Kauṭilya the sons born of a Brāhmaṇa wife shall take four shares; the son born of a Kṣatriya wife three: the son of a Vaiśya wife two shares, and the son of a Śūdra wife one share.[62] The same rule applies in the case of Kṣatriya and Vaiśya father begetting sons in three or two lower castes in order. The sons of the Brāhmaṇa father and Kṣatriya mother are called Savarṇas, those of a Kṣatriya father and Vaiśya mother, Ambaṣṭhas, of a Vaiśya father and a Śūdra mother, Ugras, of a Brāhmaṇa father and a Vaiśya mother Niṣādas; of a Kṣatriya father and a Śūdra mother Dauṣyantas and of a Brāhmaṇa father and a Śūdra mother Parāsavas.[63] Children born in the reverse order of wives of higher castes became Sūtas (Kṣatriya father and Brāhmaṇa mother), Māgadhas (Vaiśya father and Kṣatriya mother), Āyogavas (Śūdra father and Vaiśya mother), Kṣattṛs (Vaiśya father and Brāhmaṇa mother), Vaidehakas (Śūdra father and Kṣatriya mother) and Cāṇḍāla (Śūdra father and Brāhmaṇa mother). In the seventh generation the man obtains a change in caste, either being raised to a higher or being degraded to a lower one.[64] Haradatta explains this as follows. If a Savarṇa female, born of a Kṣatriya wife of a Brāhmaṇa, is married to a Brāhmaṇa and her female decendant down to the seventh generation likewise, then the offspring which the seventh female descendant bears to her Brāhmaṇa husband is equal to a Kṣatriya. The same principle is applied to the offspring of Kṣatriyas and Vaiśya wives as well as to Vaiśyas and wives of lower caste. The children born from the father of a lower caste and mothers of higher castes are considered to be outside the pale of sacred law.[65] The sons begotten by a Śūdra father are treated like outcastes and among these sons the Caṇḍālas are said to be the foulest.[66]

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[57] *Madanapārijata*, p. 144.

[58] *Aparārka*, p. 87.

[59] *Yājñ.* I.56.

[60] *Gaut. Dh.* XXVIII.5.

[61] *Gaut. Dh.* XXVIII.39.

[62] *Kaut.* III. VI.163; *Viṣṇu.* 18.1-5; *Yājñ.* I.91-95.

According to Kauṭilya in case of the mixed castes such as Sūta, Māgadha, Vrātya and Rathakāra, the inheritance will go to the most capable and the rest will be provided with mere subsistence.[67] In case of the absence of any capable sons, all will have equal shares.[68]

Intermarriage with Outcastes

Dharmasūtras universally advise the avoidance of intermarriage with outcastes. Vaśiṣṭha[69] says that the property received from the outcastes after forming alliance with them either by teaching the Veda and by officiating at sacrifices or by marriage must be given up, and the association with the person guilty of such sin should be avoided. Manu[70] says that no Brāhmaṇa should have any connection either through the Veda or through marriage with such a man, who has not been purified. Āpastamba[71] thinks that the expression *vivāyeyuh* or "let them not form matrimonial alliances" indicates that the orthodox Brāhmaṇa must neither give his daughter to *Patitasāvitrīkas*[72] nor take daughter from such person. But Vaśiṣṭha elsewhere makes some exceptions to this rule in case of girls. He says that the male offspring of outcastes are also outcastes; but not so the females, because the latter enter a new family. Such girls could be married without dowry.[73]

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[63] *Gaut. Dh.* IV.16; *Manu.* X.6-18.

[64] *Gaut. Dh.* IV.22; *Āp. Dh.* II.5, 11, 10-11.

[65] *Gaut. Dh.* IV.25; *Manu.* X.41, 67-68.

[66] *Gaut. Dh.* IV.28; *Manu.* X.51-56.

[67] *Kaut.* III.VI.163; *Āp. Dh.* II.13.3.4.

[68] *Manu.* IX.105.

Wives of Different Castes, their Standing

Though "twice-born" men could legally marry the wives of lower castes, the latter did not have the same standing as that of the wives of their husbands' own castes. Among all the wives only the wife of equal caste could personally attend[74] to her husband and assist him in his daily sacred rites.

Those who do not abide by this rule and allow wives of lower castes to perform such duties, while the wife of equal caste is living, are degraded in their social position and considered to be equal to Cāṇḍāla.

Mixed Castes

According to Manu, sons begotten by Aryans on women of equal and next lower castes have the duties of twice-born men, but all those born in consequence of a violation of the law are equal to Śūdras[75]

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[69] *Vaś. Dh.* XI.75; *Āp. Dh.* I.I.28.

[70] *Manu.* II.40.

[71] *Āp. Dh.* I.I.I.28.

[72] The time of initiation of the Brāhmaṇa is after the completion of the sixteenth year; the Kṣatriyas after the twenty-second year and Vaiṣyas after the twenty-fourth year. After those periods men of these three castes, who have not received sacrament at the proper time, become *vrātyas* or outcastes, and excluded from the right to repeat the *Sāvitrī* and despised by Aryans (*Manu.* II.39)

[73] *Vaś. Dh.* XIII.51-53.

[74] *Manu.* X. 41.

When a Daṣyu[76] begets on an Āyogava woman the son is called Sairandhra, and he lives like a slave by attending to his master and subsists by snaring animals. Kullūka says that the Sairandhra resorts to this profession in order to support himself in times of distress.

When the Vaideha begets with the same, a Maitreyaka is born, whose duty is to praise great men at the appearance of dawn by ringing a bell. When a Nīṣāda begets on a Āyogava woman, the son is called Mārgava, who subsists by working as a boatman. From the Niṣāda and a woman of the Vaideha caste springs the Kārāvara, who works in leather, and from Vaidehas and the women of Kārāvara and Niṣāda castes spring the Andhra and Meda, who have to live outside the village. The Pāṇḍusopāka is born from a Cāṇḍāla father and Vaideha mother, and deals in cane. From a Niṣāda mother and a Cāṇḍāla father, the son is called an Antyāvasāyin, and is employed in the burial grounds; he is despised even by those who are excluded from Aryan community. These mixed castes, even if they conceal themselves, are always recognized by their occupation.[77]

Origin of Mixed Castes

The origin of mixed castes as described by Manu does not seem to be based on any sound foundation. It has been pointed out by Senart[78] that the code of Manu is an interpretation in terms of *varṇa,* that is, in terms of an Indo-European social system of an existing social order which the terms could not, at any rate at the time of application, be made to fit satisfactorily. The lists given by lawgivers of the origin and functions of the various mixed castes do not always agree among themselves and provide a formalist interpretation of a state of society the origin of which was already obscure when these treatises were composed.

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[75] *Manu.* X. 41.

[76] Daṣyu :—All those tribes, which are excluded from the regular castes such as Brāhmans, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdras :—*Manu.* X. 32.

[77] *Manu.* X.

[78] Senart, *des castes dans Indich.* II.

Even at the present time, as has been shown by Jackson,[79] we find that a large number of sub-castes bear geographical names. It may be that these names are derived from the names of historical kingdoms. Similarly, in the list of sub-castes in Manu we find the place names such as Vaideha, Andhra and others, which may have originally come from these places.

Occupation of Mixed Castes

The occupation of these mixed castes, born of *anuloma* and *pratiloma* marriages are mentioned by Manu. To the Sūtas belonged the management of horses and chariots. The occupation of Ambaṣṭhas was healing. To the Vaidehakas belonged the service of woman, which probably means that they were in charge of the harem. Niṣādas used to catch fish, and carpenter's work was done by the Āyogava. Occupation of the Meda, Andhra, Kuñcu and Madgu was the slaughter of wild animals. The Kṣattṛs, Ugras and Pukkasas subsisted by killing animals living in holes. Dhigvaṇas worked with leather and Venas played on drums.[80]

Housing of Mixed Castes

The place of the dwellings of the mixed castes was also fixed by the *Dharmasūtras.* They should live near well-known trees and burial grounds, on mountains, and in groves. But the dwelling of Cāṇḍālas and Svapāka should be always outside the village and their possession should be only dogs and donkeys. They should take their food from the broken dishes and they should wander from place to place at night. They are not allowed to walk in villages and towns. During the day time they are only allowed to go about for the purpose of their work. They should always execute criminals by the command of the king and they can possess legally the clothes, beds and ornaments left over by these criminals.

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[79] Jackson, *J. B. A. S.* Vol. III, 57-115.

[80] *Manu.* X.

Hutton,[81] tries to explain the reason for the comparatively lower status of the *pratiloma* marriage than the *anuloma* in the following way. According to him the explanation is found in the results of the impact of patrilineal invaders on an indigenous matrilineal population. In the case of the offspring of patrilineal father and matrilineal mother the child would inherit from both and would have status and kinship with both. But the child of an immigrant patrilineal woman by an indigenous matrilineal male would have no place with either. In that case, he could not claim his kinship through his mother with her exogamous patrilineal clan, nor through his father with his exogamous matrilineal family. Naturally, his position will be degraded, the exact cause of which would be forgotten when both the societies adopted patrilineal system. He supports his argument by the following passages of Gautama and Viṣṇu. Gautama[82] says that those who are born of a father of lower and a mother of a higher caste stand outside the pale of sacred law. Viṣṇu[83] says that the children born of women of a higher caste have no right to inherit and the sons do not even receive a share of the wealth of their paternal grandfather.

Lower Castes Attaining Higher Rank

Even the member of lower castes could attain the status of higher castes under certain circumstances. The man who was otherwise excluded from the Aryan community secured beatitude if he died without expectation of a reward for the sake of Brāmaṇas or of cows, or in the defence of women and children. It is declared that the son born of an Aryan father on a non-Aryan mother may become like an Aryan, by his virtuous deeds. But the son begotten by an non-Aryan father on an Aryan mother can never be like an Aryan and is always unworthy of praise and respect.[84] We find many references to inter-caste marriages in the *Jātakas,* for instance in the story of a king's marrying a fruiterer's daughter, who was raised to the dignity of the chief queen.[85] In another *Jātaka*[86] the king marries an ordinary country woman, finding her strong and neat, and makes her the chief queen.

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[81] Hutton, *Caste in India*, p. 156.

[82] *Gaut. Dh.* IV. 25, 26.

[83] *Viṣṇu.* XV. 37-38.

Marriage Expenses

Although the general opinion was against marriage by purchase, such marriages must have been prevalent in society. *Āsura* or marriage by purchase is one of the eight forms of marriage. The *Ṛg-Veda* and the *Gṛhyasūtras* do not mention the sale of daughters, but from the marriage rituals, we understand that the daughters were given ornaments and presents as dowry. Even provisions are made in different *Dharmasūtras* for defraying the marriage expenses. Begging is allowed to defray expenses of marriage. Presents of money must be given according to one's ability to the deserving father of the girl to meet the expenses of marriage.[87] Manu[88] recommends the gift of money to those who want to marry for the sake of an offspring. But he does not recommend begging to finance the marriage of a man who marries a second time, while he has still a wife, when moreover the purpose of marriage is nothing but sensual enjoyment. If alms are taken in these cases, the progeny of such marriages belongs to the giver of the money.

To defray expenses of marriage, taking of money from the Śūdras, even by fraud and force is permissible.[89] Obtaining money by these means again is recommended from a man, rich in small cattle, who neglects his religious duties, though he does not belong to the Śūdra caste. This presumably refers to the Vaiśya caste. Money can also be taken from one who possesses a hundred cows, but who does not kindle the sacred fire; this probably refers to the Kṣatriya caste. Lastly, the money can be taken by force or fraud from the possessor of a thousand cows, if he does not drink soma; this may refer to Brāhmaṇa, who does not perform sacrifices properly.

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[84] *Manu.* X. 62-67; *Viṣṇu,* XVI, 18.

[85] *J.* 306.

[86] *J.* 108.

[87] *Baudh. Dh.* II. 3.5; *Gaut. Dh.* V. 21.

[88] *Manu.* XI.11.5.

[89] *Gaut. Dh.* XVIII, 24.

Similar method of acquiring money for the sake of sacrifices by fraud or force from all the castes, is condoned by Manu.[90] If the materials of the sacrifice remain incomplete except for a few articles, those may be acquired even by force or fraud from any Vaiṣya who possesses a large number of cattle, but neither performs the minor sacrifices nor drinks the soma juice, or from a Śūdra, who has no business with sacrifice. Or if a man possessing one hundred cows does not kindle the sacred fire or one possessing a thousand cows does not drink the soma juice, the sacrificer may take what he requires from the houses of these two, even though they be Brāhmaṇas or Kṣatriyas.

So it seems there is no sin in acquiring money to perform the expensive and lengthy marriage ceremony, which was thought to be absolutely necessary to preserve the family, by force or fraud from wealthy men, who do not observe their religious duties (even if they be Brāhmaṇas.)

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[90] *Manu.* XI, 12-15.

CHAPTER V

WIDOWHOOD AND DIVORCE

Satī and Widow-Remarriage

The funeral hymns of the *Ṛg-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda* show that widow-burning was a defunct custom at this time, but was represented only by a symbolic ritual.

उदीर्ष्वं नार्यभि जीवलोकं गतासुमेतमुप शेष एहि ।
हस्तग्राभस्य दिधिषोस्तवेदं पत्युर्जनित्वमभि सं वभूथ ।।
(R. V, X. 18·8)

The exact meaning of this verse is doubtful and scholars have translated it in different ways. From Sāyana's explanation it seems that the widow was to be married to the brother of the deceased. Sāyana says that the woman is addressed thus : "O woman, get up from here with a view to enter the place of your sons and grandsons, which is now your house. Get up from this place." Geldner's translation also agrees with Sāyana, which says :—"Rise, come to the world of life, O woman, he is lifeless by whose side you are lying. You have entered into wifehood with your husband, who takes your hand and desires to possess you."

According to Wilson the meaning of the second part is as follows :—"Thou hast enjoyed this state of being the wife of thy husband, the suitor who took thee by the hand." Griffith also agrees with this. So according to them there is no suggestion of re-marriage in this verse. This same verse is quoted in Āśvalāyana *Gṛhyasūtra*,[1] where it is mentioned that when the wife used to lie down by the side of her husband, her brother-in-law (*devarah*), being a representative of her husband[2] (*patisthānīyah*), or a pupil

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[1] *Āśv. Gṛ.* IV.3.16-18.

[2] Oldenberg, S.B.E. Vol. XXIX.

(of her husband), or an aged servant should cause her rise with the same Ṛg-Vedic verse. This does not suggest any remarriage.

Although it is not clear whether there is any suggestion of remarriage in the verse, it is definite that the widow was asked to rise up from the funeral pyre of her husband and brought back home. It seems probable that the widow's second marriage was not obligatory but there was no restriction to it.

The burning of widows does not appear here at all, though one of the verses was used with the slightest change of a single syllable as justification of the custom :

इमा नारीरविधवाः सुपत्नीराज्ज्ञनेन सर्पिषा सं विशन्तु ।
अनश्रवोऽनमीवाः सुरत्ना आरोहन्तु जनयो योनिमग्रे ।।

(R. V. X. 18·7)

'Let these women, who are not widows, who have good husbands, enter (anointed) with unguent and butter. Let women without tears, without sorrows and decorated with jewels, first proceed to the house."

In the above, (7th verse) an alteration was made by the priesthood of later times, reading *agneḥ* for *agre*. This would imply that widows are called on to enter the fire with their husbands.

But from the 8th verse, quoted in the beginning which calls on the widow to arise from the pyre, this reading cannot be maintained; it is now universally accepted that *agre* is correct.

In the *Atharva-Veda* references to widowhood are found especially in A. V. XVIII. 3.1-2, which are similar to the Ṛg-Vedic verses X.18.7 and X.18.8. These do not describe the custom by which a widow was made to lie down by the side of her husband, but this is distinctly mentioned in the next verse, which also refers to the wife being led forth to the husband's funeral by the side of his corpse.

अपश्यं युवतिं नीयमानां जीवां मृतेभ्याः परिणीयमानाम् ।
अंधेन यत्तमसा प्रावृतासीत्प्रक्तो अपाचीमनयं तदेनाम् ।।

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(A. V. XIII 3·3)

"I saw the maiden being led alive for the dead; as she was enclosed with blinding darkness. Then did I turn her back from in front."

Most probably the reference to her being 'enclosed with blinding darkness' implies that she was covered with a veil while she was being led to the funeral pyre. Both Sāyana and Kauśika[3] say that the verse is used as the cow is led to the funeral pyre and around the fire. But that does not seem to be the original meaning of the verse.

We do not find any reference to Satī either in the *Dharmasūtras* or in the Buddhist texts. So the Vedic hymns refer to the remarriage of widows rather than their self-immolation. Widow-burning was evidently a defunct custom at this time, represented only by the symbolic ritual of the lying beside her husband on the funeral pyre until she was asked to rise up.

Though widow-burning was so widespread in the Brahmanical religion, its origin is not in the Vedas but in the primitive belief that man after death needs the things which he had when he was living, including his wife.

In the Solomon and Fiji island widows were killed after the husband's death.[4] Widow-burning was practised among the Scythians,[5] and it seems to have become more prevalent in India after the invasion of Śakas, Kuṣāṇas and Hūṇas. Among the early Slavonic peoples widow-burning was well-known. With the Scandinavians and Germans it was a popular custom.[6]

It seems that the Indo-European custom of widow-burning was already extinct when the Aryans entered India, and had become only a symbolic ceremony, which looked back to actual widow-burning.

There are references to the widow-burning in the Greek accounts of India. Strabo quotes Aristoboulos referring to the customs existing in Taxila, that "the custom of having many wives prevails here, and is common among other races." He says that he had heard from some persons of wives who refused to burn themselves were held in disgrace.[7]

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[3] Kauś. 81.20.

[4] Winternitz, D.F.B. p. 56.

[5] Herodotus IV. 71f.

[6] Winternitz, D.F.B. pp. 56-57.

Strabo also quotes Diodorus, who says that among the Kathaians it was the custom for the widows to be burned along with the husband. But exception was made in the case of women with child.[8]

The Smṛtis of Viṣṇu[9] and Bṛhaspati,[10] however are generally believed as belonging to Gupta period,[11] and in them we find that the widow is advised to lead a life of virtue and asceticism, they prescribe the Satī as an alternative course of action.

In the dramas of Kālidāsa wives following their husbands in death are mentioned as a matter of course.[12] In the *Kumārasambhava* we find that Ratī was prepared to throw herself upon the burning remains of Madana.[13] But many allusions to widows prove their existence in society.

In the *Sūtra* period the widow was allowed to marry any near kinsman. The later *Dharmasūtras* prescribed ascetic practice for widows for a limited period only.[14] Later on, at the time of Manu and Yājñavalkya, the asceticism was to be practised by the widow all her life.[15] Later still, however, at the time of Viṣṇu and Bṛhaspati, the practice of Satī was held up as an ideal, but was not compulsory.

Widow Remarriage

Even if we do not accept the suggestion of remarriage of widows from the funeral hymns, it is quite certain that remarriage of widows used to take place in Vedic times. In the following verse there is a reference to the widow-remarriage.

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[7] Strabo XV. 62.

[8] Diodorus XVII. 91 and XIX. 33.

[9] Viṣṇu XXV. 14.

[10] Bṛhaspati XXIV. 11.

[11] Kane, H.D.S. Vol. II. pt. 1. Chronological table.

[12] Kum. IV. 33.

[13] Kum. VII. 20.

[14] Vaś. Dh. XVII. 55.

[15] *Manu* V. 156-158; *Yājñ.* I. 75, 87.

कुह स्विद् दोषा कुह वस्तोरश्विना
कुहाभिपित्वं करतः कुहोषतुः ।
को वां शयुत्रा विधवेव देवर-
मर्यँ न योषा कृणुते सधस्थ आ ॥

(R. V. X. 40.2)

"Where are you Aśvins, in the evening, where at morning? Who brings you homewards to the place (of sacrifice), as the widow brings her husband's brother on her bed as the woman brings her husband (to her)."

This does not clearly refer to the remarriage of widows, but forms the basis of the system of *niyoga* of later times. It can be inferred that marriage of the widow with the brother of the deceased was not insisted upon. On the other hand, there was no restriction placed on the widow to such an union. In the *Sūtra* period the widow was allowed to marry any near kinsman. Vaśiṣṭha[16] says that the wife of an emigrant, who has lost touch with her husband, should wait five years before re-marriage. Even the Brāhmaṇa woman with children should wait for five years, and the woman with no children four years; the wife of a Kṣatriya with children should wait for five years, but one without children three years. The wife of a Vaiśya with children should wait for four years, but one with no children, two years only. The wife of a Śūdra with children should wait for three years, but when without an issue she should wait for a year only. After that she should marry an eligible person but should not marry outside her husband's caste if any one in the family is living.

Kauṭilya[17] also lays down more or less similar rules. He even allows remarriage of those married according to the first four approved forms of marriage, because according to him, the neglect of intercourse with the wife after her monthly ablution is a violation of a husband's duty.

Since Kauṭilya, who is generally more liberal than the orthodox lawgivers, specially states that the provisions do not apply to the first four types of marriage, we can assume the conclusion that Vaśiṣṭha and other *Dharmasūtras* did

[16] Vaś. Dh. XVII. 75-80.

[17] Kauṭ. III. IV.

not allow re-marriage in cases of the first four types of marriage, and that there was normally no remarriage for the wife who had been wed by religious rites.

Baudhāyana and Gautama speak of *niyoga* but not remarriage. In the *Dharmasūtras* we get very few instances of remarriage of widows, probably because the *niyoga* was getting popular at that time.

In the earlier law books only a short period of abstinence and asceticism is prescribed for the widows. The later lawgivers however prescribe life long asceticism. Thus Manu[18] says that the widow should emaciate her body by living on pure roots and fruits, but never should mention the name of another man after her husband's death, otherwise she loses her place with her husband in heaven. Yājñavalkya[19] says that "she who does not go to another (man), whether her husband is living or dead, attains fame here and rejoices with Umā."

Niyoga

The institution of *niyoga* is not mentioned in the Vedic texts. In the *Ṛg-Veda* we find the widow married to her brother-in-law,[20] but there is no reference to his appointment to produce an heir to his dead brother.

In the *Gṛhyasūtras* there is no ritual connected with *niyoga*. The Vedic Indians always had rituals connected with every important act of life. If *niyoga* had been in practice at that time, we should have appropriate rituals for it.

It is only at the time of *Dharmasūtras* that we first meet the institution of niyoga. But there is wide divergence of opinion among different *Dharmasūtras* about its practice. Gautama says that the inheritance of a sonless man should go to the *sapiṇḍas, sagotras* or those connected by descent from the same *Ṛṣi* or the wife.[21] But the wife may also seek to raise issue to her dead husband.[22] This clearly refers to *niyoga*. The rules of *niyoga* are given in detail, and it is stated that the woman whose husband is dead should raise offspring to her brother-in-law[23] or she may obtain offspring by a *sapiṇḍa*, a *sagotra*, a *samāna-pravara* or one of the same caste.[24]

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[18] Manu. 157. 160-161.

[19] Yājñ. I. 75.

[20] R.V. X. 40.2.

[21] *Gaut. Dh.* XXVIII. 21.

[22] *Gaut. Dh.* XXVIII. 22.

The intercourse is only for the purpose of raising issue and not more than two sons should be begotten thus.[25] But there is some controversy about the paternity of the child. Gautama mentions that the child belongs to the begetter,[26] in the absence of previous agreement. But if the son is begotten when the husband is living, and at his request, then the son is begotten by a stranger, and he should belong to both the natural father and the husband, but to the husband only if the child is brought up by him.[27] From all these statements it is clear that *niyoga* was legally recognized, but that the paternity of the child depended upon an agreement between both parties.

The Vaśiṣṭha *Dharmasūtra* prescribes similar rules with some rigidity.[28] Here the widow, after the completion of six months from her husband's death, can raise offspring. The paternity depends upon agreement, as in Gautama. But there is a specific limitation that no issue should be begotten through a desire to obtain an inheritance.[29] Kṛṣṇapaṇḍita thinks that this is forbidden with the intention of preventing a son born of *niyoga* from obtaining the estate or a share of the estate of the natural father; such a son was according to other texts entitled to inherit from his natural father, but Vaśiṣṭha evidently disapproves of this. But it is also probable that this provision was intended to stop the widow from inheriting her husband's estate. In another part of the Gautama *Dharmasūtra*, *niyoga* is strongly opposed altogether, and it is recommended that the wife should be watched carefully so that others cannot approach her.[30]

In the following verse Vaśiṣṭha mentions that if among many brothers one gets a son the others should also consider him to be their own son. Thus the nephew was thought to be equivalent to the son, and this made *niyoga* hardly necessary. It seems therefore that though *niyoga* came to be recognized in society it was not much approved of.

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[23] *Gaut. Dh.* XVIII 4.

[24] *Gaut. Dh.* XVIII 5.

[25] *Gaut. Dh.* XVIII 8.

[26] *Gaut. Dh.* XVIII 9.

[27] *Gaut. Dh.* XVIII 10-14.

[28] *Vaś. Dh.* XVII. 56-57.

[29] *Vaś. Dh.* XVII. 65.

[30] *Āp. Dh.* II.6.13.7; *Gaut. Dh.* XVIII. 9.

Baudhāyana[31] mentions that the widow should abstain from honey, meat, and spirituous liquor, and sleep on the ground for one year; after the expiration of that year she can raise offspring by her brother-in-law, with the permission of the *Gurus*.[32] Again he mentions that a son, begotten by another man, has two fathers, and as he belongs to two families he has a right to perform the funeral oblation and to inherit the property of both his fathers.[33]

Āpastamba[34] states that the wife should not be given for raising issue to anyone except to a *sagotra*, because she is given to the family and not to the husband alone. In the next verse this practice is prohibited, because at the time of the *Sūtrā* man's senses were considered weak.[35] This shows that at the time when Āpastamba was writing the institution of *niyoga* had become unpopular in some Brahmanic circles.

These different provisions for the institution of *niyoga* show that it was not an established institution and as it was gradually being introduced into the society the sacred law had to accept it and make provision for it. Gautama allows the greatest laxity in this matter and gives the widest sanction to widow bearing issues for the dead husband.

Vaśiṣṭha[36] and Baudhāyana[37] give rules for *niyoga*, but speak against the institution and refer to it as against tradition. Āpastamba[38] forbids the practice altogether.

It can be assumed that the institution of *niyoga* came into Aryan society from some non-Aryan source. Throughout a long period, the sacred law was inclined to adopt the growing custom, although with misgiving. For this reason there are such differences of opinion among the different *Dharmasūtras*.

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[31] *Baudh. Dh.* II.2.4.9.

[32] The *gurus* intended are the teachers (upādhāyas) and officiating priests-*Gaut.* XVIII. 4-7, who taught or sacrificed for the deceased and his relatives. -*Vaś. Dh.* XVII. 56.

[33] *Baudh. Dh.* II.2 3. 17-18.

[34] *Āp. Dh.* II.10.2-3.

[35] *Āp. Dh.* II. 10.4.

[36] *Vaś. Dh.* XVII.15.

[37] *Baudh. Dh.* II.2.3.34.

[38] *Āp. Dh.* II.6.13.

The rules of the institution of *niyoga* are given in detail in various verses of the *Manu-Saṃhitā*. As in many other cases, contradictions are found in this text also. In the relevant passage Manu first recommends *niyoga* and says that "the owner of the seed' has got no claim over the son, but the son belongs to (the husband of) the woman,[39] who is the field (kṣetra), and is therefore called a *kṣetraja* son. Only when there was a previous contract between the two parties, did the child born belong to both of them, and was called *dvyāmusyāyana*[40].

Immediately afterwards Manu disapproves of *niyoga* and says that to appoint a wife of a twice born man to another, means the violation of the eternal law[41] and mentions the name of the wicked king Veṇa, in whose time this institution was in practice.[42]

Verses 64-68 contradict the rules given in the preceding ones. Hopkins does not think them to be later additions, because the same view is also expressed in Āpastamba II.27.2—6. The commentators have tried to explain this contradiction. It is quoted in Vīramitrodaya,[43] which says that *vidhavā* here refers to a woman whose husband has died before the marriage ceremony has been performed. Assuming this, there is an attempt to reconcile the apparent contradictions between verses 51-60, permitting *niyoga* and verses 64-68, which oppose such a practice. According to the text *niyoga* is permitted in the case of a girl who is widowed after the verbal betrothal but before the proper marriage ceremony, while its prohibition applies to a widow after the proper marriage ceremony. He seeks confirmation of this statement from verse 65, which states that the appointment of widows is nowhere mentioned in the sacred texts.

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[39] *Manu*. IX. 51-52.

[40] *Manu*. IX. 53.

[41] *Manu*. IX. 64.

[42] *Manu*, IX. 66, according to epic and puranic tradition Veṇa was the father of Pṛthu and a godless king, who demanded that the sacrifices should be offered to himself and not to the gods. He was therefore cut to pieces by the brāhmaṇas with blades of kuśa grass.

[43] *Vīramitrodaya Saṃskara* 737.

But this does not seem to be the correct explanation. It is quite evident that *niyoga* was not a system included in the sacred law.

We do not find any reference to *niyoga* in the *Ṛg-Veda* and the *Atharva-Veda* nor in the *Gṛhyasūtras*. Manu himself refers to this in verse 65. The practice of *niyoga* is approved for the first time in the *Dharmasūtras*. Even at that time there was diversity of opinion about the practice. Manu approves of it in one place and disapproves of it in another. If we accept the fact that the *Manu Saṃhitā* is a compilation of different texts, this contradiction can be easily explained. A similar custom of levirate is found among the Hebrews, as mentioned in the Book of Ruth.[44] The Aryans may have borrowed it from people in contact with the Semitic races. We find different opinions about the system in different *Dharmasūtrās*, which only reflects the varied reaction of the sacred law regarding the acceptance of the custom. In another place Manu speaks strongly against the practice of *niyoga*, when mentioning the qualities of an ideal wife.[45] He says that the Brāhmaṇas who are chaste, go to heaven even without continuing the race. A sonless woman should never try to raise an offspring by some other man. A woman who violates this rule out of a desire to beget a son is disgraced and loses her place with her husband in heaven. The child begotten by another man is not lawful. It seems that this portion of Manu was written when the institution of *niyoga* became unpopular. The *Manu-Saṃhitā* is evidently the compilation of many conflicting opinions prevalent in society at different times.

Though *niyoga* was disapproved by the later *Dharma-*

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[44] *E.R.E.* Vol. VIII. p. 469, by G. A. Barton.

[45] *Manu.* V. 158-162.

sūtras and the later parts of *Manu-Saṃhitā,* it was not altogether discarded from society, because even at the time of Nārada and Bṛhaspati we find this custom in practice. Nārada[46] prescribes *niyoga* with the brother-in-law only for the purpose of raising issue. The brother-in-law is allowed to have intercourse with the widow only until the child is born, and there should not be any intercourse through amorous desire. Moreover if they unite without authorization, the son is considered illegitimate and incapable of inheritance. If the man and woman behave otherwise than in accordance with the strict rules laid down in the text, they shall be severely punished by the king. In Bṛhaspati[47] *niyoga* is mentioned but not approved. The text states that in the Kṛta, Tretā and Dvāpara ages men were imbued with devotion and sacred knowledge, so there was no such custom as *niyoga.* But in the Kali age, when men have deteriorated, this system has to be accepted.

There are many instances of the practice of *niyoga* in the Mahābhārata. All the five sons of Pāṇḍu were raised by *niyoga.* But still Pāṇḍu had to justify his case, based on a tradition of utter laxity which was stopped by Śvetaketu.[48] Bhiṣma also had to find justification at the time of the *niyoga* of the wife of Vicitravirya.[49] It shows that the custom was permitted in the society at the time of the Epic and as it existed later it needed justification.

Divorce

In the Vedic literature there is no reference to divorce, and there is not much evidence of it in post-Vedic literature. In the *Smṛtis* too marriage is considered indissoluble and is regarded as a sacrament. Manu[50] says "Let mutual fidelity continue till death, this may be considered as the summary of the highest *dharma* of husband and wife."

Manu and Nārada[51] again say that when a man, after a solemn promise of marrying his daughter, refuses to give her, he shall be punished by the king like a thief if the suitor is free from defects.

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[46] Nārada XII. 84-88.

[47] *Bṛhaspati.* XXIV. 12-14.

[48] *Mahā. Ādi.* 103-104.

[49] *Mahā. Ādi.*

[50] *Manu.* IX. 101.

[51] *Manu.* IX. 47; *Nārada,* XII. 32.

But there are contradictions to this dictum in the same *Dharmasūtras*. In another verse, Nārada[52] says that when a bridegroom goes abroad after having espoused a maiden, the maiden should wait till three menses have passed and then choose another bridegroom, and when a respectable suitor, who is more eligible in point of religious merit, fortune and amiability present himself, even when the nuptial gift has already been presented to the parents by the first suitor, the verbal engagement previously made shall be annulled.

But Nārada[53] himself says that this rule of the indissolubility of marriage applies only to the first five forms of marriage—*Brāhma, Prājāpatya, Daiva, Ārṣa* and *Gāndharva,* and as regards the other three forms, *Āsura, Rākṣasa* and *Paiśaca,* the irrevocable gift of a maiden to a particular suitor depends on the qualification of the suitor.

There is another rule laid down by Nārada[54] that the marriage as well as betrothal should be dissoluble on the discovery of a blemish. In that case the bride shall be enjoined to repair to another man by her relatives, or in their absence, she shall go to live with another man of her own accord.

In the stories of *Pañcatantra*[55] the same theme is elaborated of the girl who married a snake. We find the following verse which corresponds to Manu's sloka mentioned above.

सकृज् जल्पन्ति राजानः सकृज् जल्पन्ति साधवः ।
सकृत् कन्याः प्रदीयन्ते त्रीण्येतानि सकृत् सकृत् ॥

"kings speak only once; saints speak (only) once. Girls are given (only) once; each of these three things (is done) once (only).

Yājñavalkya[56] says that ordinarily the father of the girl who was given first but taken away later must be punished as if he were a thief. When however a better bridegroom is available, even the "given" maiden may be

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[52] *Nārada,* XII. 24.
[53] *Nārada,* XII. 29.
[54] *Nārada,* XII. 31.
[55] *Pañcatantra.* I. 23.
[56] *Yājñ.* I. 65.

"taken" back and given to the better choice. Vijñāneśvara says that this only be done before the seven steps, because the *Saptapadī* being considered the final rite, it concludes the marriage.

But unlike the *Smṛtis* Kātyāyana gives more importance to the betrothal. He says that if, after betrothal, the bridgroom is lost, the girl shall wait for three months and then select another man. If the girl is betrothed to one and married to another, she should be given back to the person to whom she had been previously promised, even after the performance of the wedding rite ceremony, with the second choice.

It seems clear from all these statements that the union could be considered dissoluble only before the performance of the final ceremonies of marriage, before the couple became real husband and wife. Manu[57] says that if a girl is given in marriage before announcing her defects, and if she is a leper, mad, or has already lost her virginity, then the giver shall be liable to punishment. Yājñavalkya[58] says that 'if a man gives his daughter in marriage, without mentioning her defects, he should be fined the highest amercement'. Nārada[59] says that the betrothal is dissoluble on the discovery of blemish, but is indissoluble after the act of joining the bride and bridegroom's hands. Yet there is no mention of divorce. Manu even goes so far as to say that the wife cannot be released from her husband even if the husband were to sell or abandon her.[60]

According to Altekar's[61] view, divorces were permitted before the beginning of the Christian era. He supports his argument from the statement of Manu which says that a wife is not to be blamed if she abandons a husband who is impotent, insane, or suffering from an incurable or contagious disease. But this abandonment does not necessarily imply divorce, for it does not allow the wife to marry afterwards. According to Manu women are allowed to contract a second marriage when they are abandoned by her husband only if the previous marriage is not consummated.[62] Altekar thinks that this second marriage presupposes divorce. But the condition of virginity shows that the marriage was not considered to be complete before the consummation, and remarriage can only be contracted in such cases. Once the marriage was consummated the union of husband and wife was considered indissoluble. Manu describes various occasions when the wife is to be superseded. The husband is asked to bear with a hating wife for one year. After that year the husband should appropriate her property and cease to cohabit with her.[63] Medhātithi in his commentary says that the woman is not to be turned away even in the case of grievious sins. If the wife disregards her husband owing to her madness, disease or intoxication, she should be deprived of ornaments and abandoned for three months. Drunken, false, rebellious, diseased or mischievous wives are to be superseded.[64]

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[57] *Manu.* VIII. 205.

[58] *Yājñ.* I.66.

[59] *Nār.* XII.3.

[60] *Manu.* IX.46.

[61] Altekar, *P.W.H.C.* p. 83.

Another cause of supersession is barrenness of the wife. A barren wife may superseded *in* the eighth year after marriage, *in* the tenth year, if her children die, and in the eleventh year if she bears only daughters.[65]

All these refer only to supersession, but we do not find any reference to actual divorce in the *Smṛtis*.

Unlike the *Smṛtis* the *Arthśāstra*[66] recognizes divorce quite clearly. Neither the man nor the woman can dissolve the marriage without each other's consent. But divorce may be obtained from mutual enmity. If the husband apprehends danger from his wife and wants a divorce, he has to return to her all that was given to her at the time of marriage. If the woman does the same she shall give up her claim to her property. But marriage of the first four kinds—*Brāhma, Daiva, Ārṣa* and *Prājāpatya* cannot be dissolved.

The difference between the *Smṛtis* and the *Arthaśāstra* is due to the fact that the *Dharma* school or *Smṛtis* considered marriage as a sacrament and the *Artha* school regarded it as a contract. Consequently, the contractual view finds expression in the *Artha* laws. There could be divorce between the parties. Marriage according to *Dharmaśāstra* ideal, was a sacrament and could never be dissolved by human agencies. But even Kauṭilya does not permit divorce for the first four forms of marriage. Evidently the circles for which the *Arthaśāstra* was written were aware of the Brahmanic views on marriage, but had not fully accepted them. The growth of Brahmanism which followed the Mauryan period was responsible for strengthening of the orthodox view, until it became almost universal, and the possibility of divorce was forgotten.

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[62] *Manu.* IX.176.

[63] *Manu.* IX.77.

[64] *Manu.* IX.80.

[65] *Manu.*IX.81; *Baudh.* II,4,6; *Yājñ.* I,73.

[66] *Kaut.* III. ch. 3.

We do not find any specific reference to divorce in the Buddhist texts. But from some of the stories of the *Jātakas* we get reference to supersession. In the *Ruhaka Jātaka,*[67] the Brāhmaṇa chaplain of the king, had a wicked wife. She made her husband a laughing-stock to everyone by forcing him to put the horse's trappings on himself and walk like a horse. When he realized her wickedness he superseded his wife, and took another. In *Takkala Jātaka*[68] Vasitthaka, supporting his old father, had a wicked wife who advised him to kill his father. But recounting the goodness of parents, he turned his wife out of the house. In *Godha-Jātaka* the Bodhisatta advised a neglected wife to forsake her husband as birds forsake a barren tree. In the *Suttubhasta Jātaka*[70] a beautiful wife left her ugly husband with the intention of marrying another.

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[67] *J.* II. p. 115.

[68] *J.* IV. pp. 45-49.

[69] *J.* III. p. 108.

[70] *J.* III. p. 351.

CHAPTER VI

THE POSITION OF WOMEN

Women and Religion

Marriage in the *Ṛg-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda* was considered to be a religious sacrament which gave the wife a very high status in society. The wife was honoured in the family and after marriage, she was looked upon as guardian of all the members of the new family. Among the blessings bestowed on her at the marriage ceremony was the hope that she might be the queen among her parents-in-law.[1] Women held more or less equal rights with men in matters of religion. A man could not become a spiritual whole unless he was accompanied by his wife.[2] The Gods were thought not to accept the oblation offered by a bachelor.[3] The wife pounded the sacrificial rice, bathed the sacrificial animals and laid the bricks for the altar.[4] Her participation with her husband is referred to in the consecrating of the sacred fire, in the preparation of the offering, in the offering of the oblation, and in the concluding ceremonies.[5]

So it is quite evident that the participation of the wife with her husband is absolutely necessary in the matter of sacrifice. A wife who assists her husband at the kindling of the fires for any sacrificial rite, becomes connected with that rite like a priest, and no other woman can take part in the performance of that rite. And the performer cannot take any other principal wife after he has once begun his sacrifice.[6]

The wife's share in religious life is mentioned in Vedic literature. The Vedas being the highest authority, those well versed in them consider that the rites, which are to be performed with rice, *yava,* animals, clarified butter, milk and pots are to be performed with a wife to the accompaniment of chanting of the *mantras.*[7] The participation of the wife with her husband in matters of the sacrifice was absolutely necessary. Sometimes a wife performed a religious function by herself. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* Kauśalyā alone performed the Svastiyāga for her son.[8]

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[1] *R.V.* X. 85.45. [2] *Ait. Br.* I. 2.5. [3] *Śat. Br.* V.1.6.10.

[4] *Śat. Br.* V..5.3.1; III.8,2,1-6.

[5] Altekar, *P.W.H.C.*, pp. 197-98.

[6] *Āp. Dh.* II.5.11.14; *Manu.* V.167,168; *Yājñ.* I.89.

Public life

In public life generally women played an important part. It is assumed that they did not take part in the *Sabhā* and *Samiti,* which were the tribal councils. In the *Ṛg-Veda*[9] there is only one reference to women in connection with the *Sabhā* and there is no mention of their going to the *Samiti.* But even as regards the *Sabhā* it is evident from the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* that they ceased to attend it at later times.[10] By citing certain passages of the *Maitrāyaṇi Saṃhitā*[11] and *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa,*[12] Bloomfield tries to prove that women did not take part in public life or assemblies and did not attend the *Sabhā.*[13] But these passages are later compositions and we must distinguish between the age of the *Ṛg-Veda* and the *Atharva-Veda* and the later Vedic period. There had been a great change in the position of women during the passage of time. Evidence points to the fact that the earlier comparatively free tribal society was giving place to a more developed one, and women were losing their position in the process.

Women were specially mentioned in connection with a gathering known as *Vidatha.* There are differences of opinion regarding the exact meaning of the word: Jayaswal[14] thinks that *Vidatha* was the 'parent folk assembly from which *Sabhā, Samiti* and *Senā* differentiated'.

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[7] *Āp. Dh.* II.9.23.

[8] II.20.15.

[9] *R.V.* I.167.3.

[10] *Mait. Saṃ.* IV. 7.40.

[11] *Mait. Saṃ.* IV. 7,40.

[12] III. 27.7.

[13] *J.A.O.S.* Vol. XXIX.—pt. II, p. 14.

[14] Jayaswal — *Hindu Polity,* old edition, pt. I, p. 20.

In the *Ṛg-Veda* Sūryā is instructed to speak to the assembled people in the *Vidatha*.[15] It seems from the *Atharva-Veda* that women took part in the deliberations of the *Vidatha*. A desire is expressed in the marriage hymn that the bride might speak to the *Vidatha* in the advanced age.[16] From the above references it is clear *Vidatha* was attended by women as well as men and that it was a popular tribal assembly of some sort.

In this respect the *Vidatha* was completely different from the earliest known popular assemblies of the Greeks, Romans and Germans, in which women did not find any place. But the old Welsh laws, not later than the 11th century, show that women had the right to vote at the popular assembly.[17] Basing his arguments on these facts and assuming that matriarchy preceded patriarchy among the Indo-European, Dr. Sharma[18] tries to prove that the *Vidatha* was of the highest antiquity. From the association of women with the *Vidatha*, which association is not found in other branches of the Indo-European peoples, he suggested that this body had been a common tribal organization of the Indo-European, before they separated into different branches.

The Position of Women in General

From the repeated statements showing preference for sons, it is clear that the birth of daughters was not quite welcome even in the Vedic period. There were special sacraments for ensuring sons,[19] and prayers were offered at all the great sacrifices for the birth of a son to continue the cult of the spirits of the ancestors.[20] This was due to the belief that the spirits of the dead would continue to wander on earth until offerings were made by the son. As there was a growing preference for sons, daughters came to be looked upon as a burden and we find reference to ceremonies for avoiding the birth of girls.[21]

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[15] *R.V.* X. 85.26. [16] *R.V.* XIV.1.20-21.

[17] Engels — *Origin of private property etc.* p. 126.

[18] R. S. Sharma, 'Vidatha, The Earliest Folk Assembly of the Indo-Aryans' — *the Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, Vol. XXXVIII (1952), pp. 429-448.

[19] The *Puṃsavana* ceremony. The embryo begins to move in the fourth month of pregnancy, and the Puṃsavana must be performed in the second and third month of every pregnancy.

[20] *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*. IV. 4.19.

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* after explaining the utility of a son, remarks that :—

"A wife is a comrade, a daughter a misery, and a son a light in the highest heaven."[22]

Passages such as this show the comparatively lower position of women in society. During the marriage ceremony we find repeated mention of the participation of women "who are not widows", which indicates that widows were already considered unlucky, and that there were restrictions on their participation in any auspicious ceremony, a taboo which is common even in modern India.

The position of wives seems to have been better than the position of daughters or widows. The wife was considered to be the half of her husband.[23] She was in charge of the whole household and participated with her husband in religious duties. But the ideal wife was always obedient. She who did not answer back was considered praiseworthy.[24]

Dr. Sharma cites certain passages of the *Vedas* to prove similar social status of women and Sūdras.[25] The punishment for killing both Sūdras and women was the same, which shows that their position in society was also similar.[26] There are other passages from which it can be assumed that women and Sūdras did not generally have access to education and culture. The *Śatapatha Brāhmana* says that the teacher at the time of teaching should not look at women and Sūdras, dogs or black birds, because they are untrue (*asatya*).[27] According to the *Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*.[28] Sūdras and menstruating women did not have the right to read the *Veda*. But the *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra*[29] says that women and Sūdras had the right to take advice from the *Atharva-Veda*. The reference in *Śāṅkhāyana* does not necessarily imply the humble status of women, in normal conditions, but the passage in Āpastamba shows that women, as also Sūdras, were not allowed to hear the three chief *Vedas*. This ban does not occur in the *Vedas* themselves, and the socially degraded classes originally had the right to get knowledge from them. From the above reference it is quite clear that the social position of women and the Sūdra was similar. Altekar[30] thinks that the reason for the comparatively better position of women in early times was partly political and partly religious. As men were engaged most of the time in military activities, they had to a great extent to depend on women for the activities of family life. At that time the Aryans were greatly in need of warriors and so the custom of Satī was abolished. In religion, as a result, the idea grew that maidens and bachelors had no admission to heaven, and the Gods received no oblations offered by them. So a wife was an absolute necessity in the matter of religious ceremonies.

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[21] *A.V.* VI.II.3.

[22] *Ait. Br.* VII.13; Winternitz — *D.F.B.*, p. 21.

[23] *Śat. Br.* V.2.1.10.

[24] *Ait. Br.* III. 24.7.

[25] R. S. Sharma — *J.B.R.S.* 1950, pp. 183-191.

[26] *Gaut.* XXII. 16,17; *Āp. Dh.* I.9.24.3,4,5.

[27] *Sat. Br.* XIV.I.I.31; *Par. Gṛ.* II.8.3.

[28] *Śāṅkh. Gṛ.* IV.7.47.

The comparatively lower position of women in the later Vedic period was accompanied by a decline in their education. Where in the *Ṛg-Veda* we have reference to women *ṛṣis*, skilled in Vedic lore, it would appear that later, women learnt only from near relatives and did not go out to famous teachers or centres of learning. Whether the decline in education caused the lowering of the social status of women or was caused by it, there is little doubt that the two factors would work together in the same direction. A lowering of the intellectual standard expected of an Aryan woman would lead to her decline in the social scale, and this would lower her standards still further. This process, which began in the later Vedic period, has perhaps been going on down to the early 19th century, when even the wealthiest and most well-born Indian women were illiterate.

[29] *Āp. Dh.* II.11.29.11-12.

[30] Altekar — *P.W.H.C.*, pp. 340-343.

The joint mention of Sūdras and women may be due to the admission of non-Aryan brides into Aryan society. Naturally non-Aryan girls would not have any Vedic teaching, and would thus be excluded from religious performances. So they were grouped together with the Sūdras, who similarly did not have any right to Vedic studies and were considered low. But the contempt for women had just started in this period; it became even more widespread in the later period, as more and more non-Aryans came into contact with the Aryans. But the general idealism of marriage and close mutual relationship of the husband and wife continued to be emphasized in the later Vedic period as in the time of the *Ṛg-Veda.*

Women in Zoroastrianism held more or less the same position as that of the women in India in the Vedic period. A woman was fit to perform priestly duties for other women, and those women who were not feeble-minded could perform them for children.[31] Those mothers were worshipped who had many sons.[32] Women were considered holy if they were well-principled and obedient to their husbands.[33]

Thus though bound to be strictly obedient to their husbands or guardians they used to occupy a very honourable position in the community. The passages on which these statements are based appear in texts, later than the *Vedas,* but it seems probable that they represent the state of affairs in earlier Persia, as well as in Sasanian times. It would seem that the Persian women retained their high status of the pre-historic Indo-Iranian tribal society while those in India gradually lost it. It may be that this was because the Persians did not perhaps come in contact with dark skinned aboriginals, whom they looked down on, and thus the status of their women was not lowered by concubinage or marriage with such "low" girls. The Persians, who from the 6th century B.C. ruled a multinational Empire, do not appear to have had quite the same sense of racial superiority as their kinsmen in India.

[31] Pahlavi texts (*S.B.E.*) *Shayast La-Shayast* Ch. X.35.

[32] Pahlavi texts (*S.B.E.*) *Yast and Sirozala* Ch. XXV.143.

[33] *Yast.* XXII.I.18.

Position of Women affected by the Eight Forms of Marriage:

In the *Dharmasūtra* period, with the introduction of different forms of marriage, the status of women deteriorated although in the Epics there are many outstanding characters among women as well as men. In the *Dharmasūtras* there is a definite sanction for the domination of the husband over the wife. The idea of spiritual union of the man and wife by magic *mantras* gave place to the idea of transference of the ownership of the bride. Though the *Gandharva* marriage and *Svayaṃvara* implied the independent choice of the girl, in the *Rākṣasa* and *Āsura* forms she could be carried away by force or sold like chattel with the sanction of society. Even in cases of forceful abduction, the hero of the occasion would often make a gift of the bride to a friend, which was apparently quite legitimate and in that case even the satisfaction of being married to a hero was denied to the girl. With the introduction of lower types of marriage, the wife lost her position and dignity of *Gṛhapatnī,* and was not allowed to take part in the religious rituals of the husband.[34] In marriage by capture or purchase the wife was treated as a chattel and the husband was considered to be her master. Baudhāyana[35] refers to such wives as *Dasī* and does not allow them to participate in the religious rituals of the husband.

Once a girl was looked upon as a chattel, she was considered capable of being acquired like other property by purchase or by force. None of the lower forms of marriage was recognized as leading to the dignified position of *Gṛhapatnī* for the wife. We find reaction on the part of the exponents of the sacred law to the introduction of the inferior forms of marriage. One school did not recognize these marriages as carrying religious validity and tried to sanctify them by religious ceremonies afterwards. The Vaśiṣṭha *Dharmasūtra* says that if a girl is abducted by force but is not married with the recitation of sacred texts then she can be regarded as a maiden and can be given away to another man.[36]

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[34] *Baud. Dh.* I.11.21.2.

[35] *Baud. Dh.* I.11.21.2.

[36] *Vaś. Dh.* XVII.73.

Position of Women in Hindu Law

In the *Dharmasūtras* the duties of the wife are described in detail. A woman must always remain dependent. Her father protects her in childhood, her husband protects her in youth, and her sons protect her in old age.[37] Women must be guarded particularly against evil inclinations, for, if they are not so guarded, they will bring sorrow on both the families; because they are not trustworthy and they easily attach themselves to sensual enjoyment.[38] Even weak husbands should always be careful in guarding the wives.[39]

Manu says that the husband must always be worshipped, even if he is destitute of virtue, or seeks pleasure elsewhere, or is devoid of good qualities.[40] The wife must always be cheerful, clever in household management, economical in expenditure and careful in cleaning her utensils.[41]

The husband receives the authority to dominate his wife by virtue of the betrothal arranged by the father and guardian of the bride.[42] So the wife must obey the husband as long as he lives, and after his death she should always respect his memory. Viṣṇu says that when her husband is away from home the wife should not decorate herself with ornaments or take part in amusements, should not live in the house of strangers, should not stand near the doorway or by the windows of her house, and not act independently in any matter.[43]

According to our texts the main reason for the guarding of the wife is to preserve the purity of the offspring. Women should not be guarded by force, but they are to be employed in the collection and expenditure of their husband's wealth, in keeping everything clean, in fulfilment of religious duties, in preparation of the husband's food, and in looking after the household utensils.

There are punishments laid down for the wives who do not perform their duties towards their husbands. According to Medhātithi, Govinda and Kullūka[44] the duties of husband and wife are placed in the section on civil and criminal law, because the king can and is even bound to enforce their observance by punishment, if either of the two raises a complaint. Manu says that the duties of man and wife form one of the topics which gave rise to lawsuits.[45] Viṣṇu[46] even goes so far as to include the class of women who violate their duties towards their husbands among criminals, to be put to death by the king.

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[37] *Manu.* IX.3.

[38] *Manu.* IX.2-5.

[39] *Manu.* IX.6.

[40] *Manu.* IX.V.154; *Nār.* XVIII.22.

[41] *Manu.* V.150.

[42] *Manu.* V.152.

[43] *Viṣṇu*— XXV.9-11.

[44] *On Manu.* IX.1.

There are also references to very severe punishment for adultery. Men who commit adultery with the wives of others shall be punished by the king in such a way as to cause terror, and afterwards banished. It is believed that the mixture of castes is caused by such a crime and therefore it is considered as a great sin.[47] Medhātithi, Govinda and Kullūka say that by an admixture of caste the sacrifices would not be offered properly because duly qualified sacrificers would be wanting. If sacrifices are not duly offered there will be no rain and everything will perish. Vaśiṣṭha[48] says that the person who abducts another man's wife may be slain and such a killing will not be considered a crime. Manu considers the slaying of adulterous women as a minor offence. Not only is adultery considered to be a serious crime by most of the lawgivers[49] but from the religious point of view it is a mortal sin. Bṛhaspati suggests the followng punishments for adulterous women: when a woman has been enjoyed against her will, she should be kept in the house well guarded, smeared with ashes, lying on a low couch and receiving bare maintenance only; as an atonement for her sin she is to be caused to perform the *Kṛcchra* or *Paraka* penance in case she had intercourse by a man of her equal caste; if she has been enjoyed by a man of inferior caste, she is abandoned and put to death; but when the woman takes the initiative and excites the man, her nose, lips and ears having been cut off, she is to be paraded in the streets and plunged into water or is torn to pieces by dogs in a public place.[50] Vaśiṣṭha[51] says that the food given by the paramour of a married woman or by a husband who allows a paramour to his wife should not be eaten. Manu[52] says that even the food given by those who knowingly tolerate a paramour of their wives should not be eaten. All the lawgivers are unanimous in that the adulteress and he who eats food given by persons born through adultery, are excluded from Śrāddha.[53] In consequence of this crime are born idiots, dumb, blind, deaf and deformed persons who are despised by the virtuous. The sinful acts committed with his body, make a man inanimate in the next birth.[54] Therefore penances are always to be performed for the sake of purification.[55]

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[45] *Manu.* VIII.7.

[46] *Viṣṇu.* V.163.

[47] *Manu.* VIII.352.

[48] *Vaś. Dh.* III.16.

[49] *Manu.* IX.235; *Baudh. Dh.* I.18,18; *Viṣṇu.* V.3-5.

[50] *Bṛhaspati.* XXIII. 13-16.

[51] *Vaś. Dh.* XIV.6.

Viṣṇu[56] says that such mortal sinners are purified by a horse sacrifice and by visiting all *Tirthas.* According to Baudhāyana[57] for such a sin, one must perform a *Kṛcchra,* an *Atikṛcchra* and a *Cāndrāyana* penances. Violating the Guru's bed is one of the greatest crimes. Manu says that the punishment for this crime should be the mark of a female part impressed on the forehead with a hot iron. The *Dhammapada*[58] mentions the following stages of suffering for the adulterous man : firstly demerit, then an uncomfortable bed, thirdly punishment and last of all hell. In the *Cullavagga,*[59] adultery is considered to be an Amagandha i.e. what defiles one.

But women are also protected by the law. Manu prescribes specially light punishments for a woman. He says that on women, infants, men of disordered mind, the poor and the sick, serious torture should not be inflicted, but blows with a cane, whip (*siphā*)[60] or rope and the like may be given. Women without guardians are to be protected by the king.[61] The king should protect wives and widows who are faithful to their husbands, when the latter are absent or dead; he should also care for women who are barren, or afflicted with disease, or whose family is extinct.[62] According to the commentators the king's protection is only to be given in cases where the woman's relatives are either dead or unable to provide for her or when they try to oppress her.[63]

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[52] *Manu.* VIII.352.

[53] *Āp. Dh.* II.7.17-21; *Gaut. Dh.* XV. 17; *Manu.* III.156.

[54] *Manu.* XII.7-8.

[55] *Manu.* XI.53-54.

[56] *Viṣṇu.* XXXV.6.

[57] *Baudh. Dh.* II.2.4.12.

[58] *Dhammapada* Ch. XVIII. S.B.E., Vol. X. pt. 1.

[59] Cullavagga, *Amagandhasutta.*

[60] Siphā-a whip is explained by Rāgh, as a rod measuring five fingers, or the pendent root of the fig tree according to Nār. and Nand.

[61] *Manu.* VIII.28.

According to Viṣṇu[64], abandoing one's wife, being a crime of the fourth degree, is purified by the performance of *Cāndrāyaṇa* or *Paraka* sacrīfices or by the sacrifices of the cow. Nārada[65] says that a person who abandons his wife cannot be a witness in a law-court. Viṣṇu[66] again mentions that the suitor who abandons a faultless girl and the husband who forsakes a blameless wife are to have the same punishment as a thief would get. It is evident that the mutual duties of the husband and wife might be the subject of a law-suit. Though the position of the wife was much lower in society and she was supposed to be dominated by her husband, the wife's rights were nonetheless protected by law, and the king himself would interfere if necessary to safeguard them.

Manu on the Position of Women

As with other topics we find some conflicting views in Manu regarding the positon of woman in society. There are statements to the effect that women are naturally wicked. They are so passionate that they do not care for beauty or age in the choice of lovers. They are naturally heartless, and disloyal by nature. So they should be always guarded.[67] While discussing the duties of students Manu asks the student who has attained his twentieth year of age to avoid all association with women. He should not even salute his teacher's wife by touching her feet. Women can lead astray not only fools but also learned men, so men must always protect themselves from them. Manu even goes so far as to prohibit a young man from sitting in a lonely place with his mother, sister or daughter.[68]

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[62] *Manu.* VIII.28.

[63] Gov. & Rāgh. & Medh. on *Manu.*

[64] *Viṣṇu.* XXXVII.60.35.

[65] *Nārada.* I.180.

[66] *Viṣṇu.* V.160-163.

[67] *Manu.* IX.14-17.

There is confirmation of these prescriptions in later texts also. In Dakṣa[69] the following view is expressed. "Women are like the leech; but while the poor leech draws blood only, the woman draws your riches, your property, your flesh, your vitality and your strength. During adolescence, she is in fear of the man, during youth, she demands excessive pleasure, and when her husband becomes old, she does not care a straw for him". In the Rāmāyaṇa[70] it is mentioned that "for women there is no one loved or hated, they betake themselves to all men; just as creepers growing in a thick forest lean themselves on any tree". 'Women are impure on the birth of child. A *Snātaka* should not eat food prepared for a woman in childbed or by a woman whose ten days of impurity have not elapsed.[71] A *Snātaka* should not look at the naked woman, nor should he converse with a menstruating woman.

A man while performing penance should on no account talk to women, Śūdras and outcastes.[72] Medhatithi however remarks that the penitent is allowed to talk to the women of his household if necessary. Women should not perform any sacrifice or vow, no fast must be performed by them apart from their husbands, and no girl or young woman has the right to offer an *Agnihotra.*[73]

In contrast to these observations, women are highly honoured and praised in other passages by Manu.[74] The husband is said to have received his wife from the gods and he should not think that he has married her according to his own will. So he should always do what is agreeable to the gods, always support her while she is faithful. According to the interpretation of Medhātithi, Kullūka and Rāghava, this implies that a wife must be supported even if she does not love her husband, because she is the gift of the gods Soma, Gandharva and Agni.[75] The same idea is expressed in *Mahābhārata*. That man obtains his wife as a gift from the gods is the teaching of the law, he who does not treat her well falsifies the word of men and gods alike.[76] According to Manu the mouth of a woman is always pure.[77] Manu again says that where women are honoured the gods are pleased, but no sacred rites yield rewards if they are not honoured. The family where the women are happy, always prospers, but the family where they live in grief wholly perishes. So men should always honour women for their own interest.[78] The *Mahābhārata* has similar passages. There we find the statements like: 'Women are like the goddess of wealth—they should be respected by the man desiring his own welfare; when loved woman becomes the veritable goddess of prosperity.[79] Yājñavalkya says that women should be honoured with ornaments, clothes and food by their husbands, brothers, fathers, parents, relations, mothers-in-law, brothers-in-law and maternal relations.[80] The *Mahābhārata* similarly says that women should be honoured by their fathers, brothers, fathers-in-law and brothers-in-law if they are desirous of their own welfare.[81]

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[68] *Manu.* II.215.

[69] Quoted in *Vivādartnākara*, p. 413.

[70] Quoted in *Vivādartnākara*, p. 414.

[71] *Manu.* IV. 212.

[72] *Manu.* XI. 224.

[73] *Manu.* XI. 36.

[74] *Manu.* IX. 95.

According to Viṣṇu the person who is ready to die for the sake of a woman gets heavenly blessings.[82] Special privileges were given to the newly married and pregnant women. They were allowed to eat even before the guests were served.[83]

If we examine all the relevant passages of Manu carefully it becomes evident that all these contradictory statements cannot be the view of a single author. As we have already pointed out, the *Manu-saṃhitā* is the compilation of the works of different authors in different times. If that is true then these contradictions can easily be explained. The passages of Manu, which speak highly of women are in conformity with the Vedic ideology which gives the wife a high and dignified position in society. But later,

[75] Medh. Kull. Rāgh. on *Manu*. IX. 95.

[76] *Mahā. Anu.* 44.

[77] *Manu*. V. 130.

[78] *Manu*. III. 56-59.

[79] *Mahā. Anu.* 46.

[80] *Yājñ.* I. 82.

[81] *Mahā. Anu.* 46. 5-6.

[82] *Viṣṇu*. XXII. 32.

[83] *Manu*. III. 114.

subjugation of woman came to stay and we find evidence of the gradual decline of their status in all the law books of a subsequent period.

Cruelty to Women

If we compare Kauṭilya and Manu we find that the position assigned by Manu to women was not so high as that accorded in Kauṭilya's laws. According to Kauṭilya the wife had the right to claim maintenance from her husband, but if she decided to take the protection of any one of her father-in-law's family or she lived independently, then her husband could not be sued for maintenance. Again, when women were ill-treated beyond mild abuse or 'three blows' either with a piece of bamboo[84] or with a rope or with the hand, they may bring an action for defamation or assault, but the punishment, presumably in the form of a fine, would be half of the punishment levied for ordinary defamation and criminal hurt. According to Manu the punishment in such a case will be same as that of theft, that is, imprisonment, putting in fetters, and various kinds of corporal punishment.[85]

Transgression

According to Kauṭilya[86] if a woman drinks spirituous liquor or engages in amorous sports she shall be fined three *paṇas*, and she shall be fined six *paṇas* for going out in the day-time to sports, or to see another woman, or to witness public shows. It seems to be implicitly understood that these refer to acts of the wife without her husband's permission.

According to Manu women shall be fined six *Kṛṣṇalas* in such cases.[87] According to Kauṭilya a wife shall be also fined in certain cases, such as when she shuts the door against the husband, or if a man and woman make signs to each other with a view to sensual enjoyment. A woman is to be whipped by a caṇḍāla five times on each side of the body, when she is seen holding conversation in suspicious places.[88]

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[84] *Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra* III. 3. p. 155; Shama Shastry's translation of *veṇu-dala* as "bamboo bark" is quite meaningless.

[85] *Manu.* VIII. 299, 300.

[86] *Kauṭ.* III.

[87] *Manu.* IX. 84.

These fines were perhaps paid from the woman's *strīdhana* as that was the only property which she had. Or this rule may have applied only to low-class women who had their own income, as we find in the Viṣṇu *Smṛti*[89] that debt contracted by the wife of a herdsman, distiller of spirits, public dancer, washerman, or hunter shall be discharged by the husband because he is supported by his wife. We must not overlook the possibility, however, that payment of these fines was incumbent on the husband who by his lack of control might be responsible for endangering the *varṇāśramadharma*.

In the Buddhist texts we find that the position of women is more or less the same as in the *Smṛtis*. Women held a dependent position in the household, and they were considered to be quite unfaithful by nature and so they were never to be trusted. We do not however find such strictness in guarding the women or in the punishments inflicted on them as is described in the *Smṛti* literature.

It is said that the passion of woman is insatiate, and she does not but act according to her inborn nature.[90] There are many stories in the Jātakas describing the unfaithful wife. As this lack of faithfulness is considered to be inborn in women we find many instances of tolerance on the part of the husband. Once a courtier intrigued with the queen. When the king knew of it he was in a dilemma, because the queen was dear to him and the courtier was a useful person. The king asked advice from a councillor, describing the courtier as a jackal, himself as a lion and the queen as a happy lake. The advice of the councillor was: "Out of the mighty river all creatures drink at will. If she is dear, have patience, the river is river still."[91]

In another Jātaka[92] the following story is told. A king went abroad because of disturbances on the borders of his kingdom. At the request of the queen he used to send messengers to enquire after her health. He sent sixty-four messengers thus, and the queen misconducted with all of them. At last, when she attempted to do the same with the royal chaplain, he refused and reported the matter to the king. But the queen was pardoned on the advice of the chaplain, as such conduct was considered to be inborn in women.

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[88] *Kauṭ*. III.

[89] *Viṣṇu*. VI. 37.

[90] *J*. 121.

[91] *J*. III. 126.

It seems that in the royal families where polygamy was very common it was not possible to keep to a high moral standard, and the king's harem was particularly corrupt and immoral. The general attitude of the Jātaka is that even among ordinary people women do not find interest in their own houses, and no woman is wholly faithful to one man alone. The Jātakas give many stories to prove this.[93] These recall the passage of Manu where he mentions that the women however carefully guarded through their natural temper and heartlessness, become faithless towards their husbands.[94] The *Dhammapada*[95] mentions that bad conduct is the taint of a woman. In the *Vinaya piṭaka*[96] ten kinds of women are mentioned namely protected by the mother, protected by the father, protected by the parents, protected by the brother, protected by the sister, protected by the relations, protected by their lineage, protected by Dhamma, and protected by a stick. This passage represents the same idea as that of the *Dharmasūtras*, which say that the women are never independent and that they require always to be guarded and protected.

We get a description of an ideal wife in the Buddhist literature. She is equal to her husband in age, temperament and virtue. She should be obedient to her husband.[97] In the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*[98] a good wife is described as she who resembles a mother, a sister, or a slave. This classification is expanded in the *Sujātā Jātaka*[99], where seven kinds of wives are mentioned, of which the following four are praised and attain bliss. The first is the motherly type who is compassionate to the good, cares for husband just like a mother, and guards his wealth. Second is the

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[92] *J.* 121.

[93] *J.* II. p. 323; *J.* V. p. 940.

[94] *Manu.* IX. 14-15.

[95] *Dhammapada.* Ch. XVIII.

[96] *V.P.* V. 4.1-2.

[97] *J.* IV. 76.

[98] *Anguttara.* IV. 92.

[99] *J.* III. 348-349.

sisterly type, who respects her husband in the way a younger sister does, is modest, and is obedient to her husband. Next is the type resembling a friend, who is always a pleasing sight to her husband, well-bred and virtuous, who gives up her life for him. The last is the slave type, who is always calm even when abused, afraid of violence, true hearted, and bending to her husband's will. Of these the slave type is considered to be the best and praised most highly. The three bad types are: (1) The one who is bad hearted and not compassionate; the one who loves others but hates her husband and one who destroys all the wealth of her husband. (2) The one who always tries to steal something which her husband brings home. (3) The one who is careless of duty, lazy, passionate, greedy, full of wrath and hate and tyrannical to all underlings.

A similar idea is expressed in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*[100] where are described the various classes of persons that a wife may resemble. If she resembles a murderess, a thief or a master, she is bad and may go to hell. The mutual duties of husband and wife are described in the *Dīgha Nikāya*[101]. The wife should show her affection for her husband in the following ways: by doing her duties thoroughly, by good treatment of the household, by not commiting adultery, by taking care of what he earns, and by skill and zeal in all she has to do. The husband also has corresponding duties to his wife: he should show her respect and compliance, not commit adultery, leave her in charge of the home and supply her with finery.

We find that, as well as these stories illustrating the unfaithful character of women, there are various stories depicting women of exemplary character, full of wisdom and chastity,[102] for instance that of Sambulā who followed her leprosy-stricken husband to the forest, served him with devotion, remained faithful to him, though tempted by a demon, and finally by her virtue and purity saved her husband from the disease.[103]

[100] *Aṅguttara Nikāya.* V. p. 940.
[101] *D.N.* III. 190.
[102] *Sambulā-* J. V. p. 89; *Udaya. J.* IV. p. 458.
[103] *J.* V. 92.

We get the same picture of the position of women from the Jaina texts. They warn the monks against women. Women are said to be clever and they approach the monks meekly and politely in the beginning. But when once they have control over the monks they make them do whatever they like.[104] A monk is advised not to have any association with his daughter or daughter-in-law, with nurses or female slaves, or with grown-up girls.[105] This is similar to the passage of Manu where he says that the Brahmacārin should not sit in a lonely place with even his mother, sister or daughter, for the senses are powerful and master even a learned man.

A section of the *Sutrakṛtāṅga* described the nature of women in detail. Here the women are depicted as treating their husbands as if they were slaves and sending them on all sorts of errands. They are looked on by their wives as equals of slaves, animals, servants and beasts of burden.[106]

We can also get some idea of the position of Hindu women from Greek accounts. It is clear from them that polygamy prevailed here at that time. Strabo[107] basing his statement on Megasthenes, says that Indians used to marry many wives. Some of them they married to find in them obedient attendants, and others for pleasure and to fill their houses with children. The wives used to prostitute themselves unless chastity was enforced by compulsion. We can assume from this statement that the position of women was very low in Mauryan times, and wives were considered as objects of pleasure and instruments for bearing children. The position of some wives was that of slaves. It can be assumed that they were not honoured and were considered to be so unfaithful naturally that their chastity could only be preserved by force. The same idea is also expressed elsewhere, where it is said that the institution of Satī was introduced to suppress the practice of administering poison to the husband.

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[104] *Sutrakṛtāṅga*. I. 4.7.

[105] *Sutrakṛtāṅga*. I. 4.13.

[106] *Sutrakṛtāṅga*. I. 4. ch. II.

[107] *Strabo*. IV. 54.

CONCLUSION

The main phases in the development of the institution of marriage from the earliest times to A.D. 500 may now be roughly indicated. In the early Vedic period the rituals were very simple and consisted of the bridegroom's taking the hand of the bride (*pāṇigrahaṇa*)[1], (a symbol of a solemn contract), and his placing her in a chariot and carrying her away (*vahatu*)[2]. Offerings were made to Agni, the sacred fire, gods were invoked to give their blessings to the newly married couple, to give them health, wealth and offspring. *Mantras* were uttered to drive away the evil spirits from every path of their life. Gradually in course of time, rituals became more complicated. A study of the rituals as prescribed by the *Gṛhyasūtras* shows that many indigenous rites had already been absorbed. The circumstances freed the Aryans to admit and assimilate the local customs and associated cultures.

This power of assimilation is a unique characteristic of Hindu civilization, which has, from time to time, absorbed and made a part and parcel of itself, various manners, customs and religious practices, without losing its own identity. The impact of other civilizations and cultures, both from inside and outside India, has far from destroying it, revitalized it, giving it a wider and broader outlook with immense possibilities of growth.

The Marriage *mantras* laid down the principles for the sort of life the married couple were to lead, in the future, defined their attitude towards each other and towards their relatives and also allocated to them their socio-religious duties. It was thus made clear to the bridal pair that the life of a householder was not for pleasure only, but that he was a member of a large family and a larger society both of which he was enjoined to serve. That their life together was to be of a high moral order was also indicated in the *mantras*.

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[1] See above, p. 9.

[2] See above, pp. 14.

In the early Vedic period, it would appear, that only one form of marriage was nomally followed, an early type of the *Brāhma-vivāha*. Gradually, in the *Dharmasūtra* period the eight forms of marriage became well established, with the widest diversity of opinion among the law-givers about their acceptability.[3] This again shows the Hindu genius of assimilation and adaptability to environment, which accepted hard facts and would rather bring newer acquisitions within its fold than reject them by being too strict. Society was expanding, and expansion meant fusion, assimilation and further acquisition. In the early period Brāhma was the only recognized form of marriage among the Aryans. Gradually other forms were accepted as contact with the indigenous peoples grew. As this was inevitable, the law-givers had to make some provisions for it.

We do not find any reference to child marriage in the early Vedic period; but later,[4] it became popular. In the Smṛtis[5] we find further lowering of the age of marriage. The later the books, the earlier do they prescribe the age for girls to be married. Various causes were responsible for such a lowering of the age. It was in part the result of the general deterioration of the position of women. It may also have been a reaction on the part of the high caste Aryans to non-Aryan sexual customs of which they disapproved.

The rules of intermarriage with different *varṇas* were not very much discussed in the early Vedic period. Later, there were conflicting opinions among law-givers on this point.[6] The necessity of equality of birth was already mentioned in the *Gṛhyasūtras* and in the period of the *Dharmasūtras* and *Smṛtis* it became more strict. In the *Dharmasūtras* though we find that intermarriage was allowed, it was not much approved of and the wives of lower caste could not attain the same position as that of equal caste; moreover a high caste man's cohabiting with a Śūdra woman was considered to be a serious crime. And yet, inter-caste marriages came to be accepted in the society. Sons begotten by the Aryans on women of the lower caste were considered to be mixed castes and different occupations were assigned to them according to their status. The dwellings of the mixed castes were also fixed.[7] In all respects, they were not to be included in the Aryan community. Despite such strict rules, we find that a man of lower caste could attain the status of an Aryan by his virtuous deeds.

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[3] See above, p. 89.

[4] See above, pp. 111-113.

[5] See above, p. 113.

[6] See above, pp. 120-121.

Satī was evidently a defunct custom[8] in the Ṛg-Vedic times and was only represented by a symbolic ritual. In the Sūtra period[9] widows were allowed to marry. The later *Dharmasūtras* prescribe ascetic practices for widows only for a limited period. Manu and Yājñavalkya prescribe life-long asceticism. But later still, Viṣṇu and Bṛhaspati[10] definitely approve of Satī and hold it an ideal for women. Satī was evidently of foreign origin. The Indo-European custom of widow-burning was already extinct when the Aryans entered India. It must have been reintroduced into the society with the general lowering of the position of women.

As regards the institution of *niyoga* we do not find any mention of it in the Vedas or *Gṛhyasūtras*. It appears for the first time in *Dharmasūtras*. In the later *Smṛtis*[11] we find both approval and disapproval of it, which shows that conflicting opinions prevailed in society at that time. All these facts show that the custom must have been borrowed from outside, perhaps from the people in contact with the semitic races. In the *Mahābhārata* we find frequent references to the practice of *niyoga* but even there we find that it was not much approved and therefore needed justification.

The general ideology of Vedic marriage did not leave any scope for divorce. The same doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage is also found in the *Dharmasūtras* and *Smṛtis*[12]. But in the *Smṛtis* there are certain condi-

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[1] See above, p. 128.

[8] See above, pp. 132-135.

[9] See above, p. 136.

[10] See above, p. 135.

[11] See above, pp. 137-139.

[12] See above, pp. 142-143.

tions in which supersession is allowed[13]. Unlike the *Smṛtis* the *Arthaśāstra*[14] recognises divorce very clearly, though it does not permit divorce for the first four forms of marriage, which are called '*dharma-vivāha*'. The ideal of marriage according to the *Smṛtis* and the *Arthaśāstra* is basically different. While *Dharmasūtras* and *Smṛtis* considered marriage as a sacrament and hence indissoluble, the *Arthaśāstra* regarded it as a contract.

The position of women underwent a great deterioration during this process of integration. In the early Vedic age women used to accompany their husbands in their religious duties. In public life also women played an important part. The position of women gradually became lower, probably owing to the introduction of non-Aryan brides into Aryan society. The non-Aryan girls naturally did not have the Vedic teaching and were thus excluded from the religious performances.

With the introduction of different forms of marriage the wives who were married according to the lower forms could not rise to the status of dignity of the *Gṛhapatnī*. In marriage by capture or purchase the wife was treated as a chattel and the husband was considered her master. In the *Dharmasūtra*, domination of the man over the wife is definitely prescribed. The idea of the spiritual union of man and wife gave place to the idea of transference of ownership of the girl. In the work of *Bṛhaspati* we even find the wife referred to by the word *dāsī*. With the lowering of the position of women they came to be considered unfaithful by nature.

With the vast and hurried changes of modern times, old structures are tumbling on all sides and a rapid change in the ideals and forms of Hindu marriage and its rituals is taking place. The basic ideal of Hindu marriage, its sacramental character as an indissoluble spiritual union, is being questioned in the present day context of rationalism and changed environment and atmosphere. In the past, those who wanted to marry outside the prohibited sphere, left the Hindu fold and contracted marriages by other forms, not Hindu. Today, Hindu marriage itself has been changed by legislation and still faces rationalism and reorganization. With the gradual realization of this goal, it may be supposed that the status of women will be raised and the rites and rituals will be simplified. Already many rites are being forgotten and dropped.

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[13] See above, pp. 144-145.

[14] See above, p. 145.

Peeping into the future, it may not be very wrong to predict, that these rites and rituals of a hoary past, which owe their origin to the Vedas, which have stood the test of ages, and which have been multiplied a hundredfold cultures, are faced with the threat of gradual lapse. But the study of rituals will remain fascinating nonetheless, as long as the institution of human marriage survives.

THE ORDER OF THE MARRIAGE RITUAL ACCORDING TO SŪTRAS

ŚĀNKHAYANA

1. Fire kindled by attrition.
2. Selection of auspicious day.
3. Selection of the bride.
4. Negotiation.
5. Sacrifice made by the bridegroom.
6. Ājya and Mahāvyāhṛti.
7. Dance of woman.
8. Clothing.
9. Arghya at the reception of the bridegroom.
10. Mahāvyāhṛti.
11. Pāṇigrahana.
12. Stepping on the stone.
13. Walking round the fire.
14. Lājahoma.
15. Saptapadī.
16. Bath of the bride.
17. Journey to the husband's home.
18. Sitting on the bull's hide.
19. Placing a boy in the bride's lap.
20. Looking at the pole-star.
21. Drinking of curd etc. together.
22. Cohabitation.

ĀŚVALAYANA

1. Selection of auspicious day.
2. Ājya and Mahāvyāhṛti.
3. Selection of the bride.
4. Stepping on the stone.
5. Pāṇigrahaṇa.
6. Walking round the fire.
7. Lājahoma.
8. Seven steps.
9. Breaking the journey at the house of a Brāhmaṇa.
10. Looking at the pole-star.
11. Journey of the bride.
12. Reception of the bride at her husband's home.
13. Sitting on the bull's hide.
14. Cohabitation.

GOBHILA

1. Selection of an auspicious day.
2. Selection of the bride.
3. Ritual bath.
4. Clothing.
5. Ājya and Mahāvyāhṛti sacrifices.
6. Stepping on the stone. }
7. Lājahoma. } 3 times
8. Walking round the fire. }
9. Saptapadī.
10. Pāṇigrahaṇa.
11. Journey of the bride.
12. Breaking the journey at the house of a Brāhmaṇa.
13. Sitting on the red bull's hide.
14. Looking at the pole-star.
15. Ājya oblation.
16. Eating together.
17. Mounting on the chariot.
18. Sitting on the bull's hide again.
19. Placing a boy in the bride's lap.
20. Ājya oblation.
21. Cohabitation.

PĀRASKARA

1. Kindling the fire by attrition.
2. Selection of auspicious day.
3. Anointing by the bride's father.
4. Kanyādāna.
5. Looking at each other.
6. Walking round the fire.
7. Mahāvyāhṛti and Ājya sacrifices.
8. Lājahoma.
9. Stepping on the stone.
10. Sitting on the bull's hide.
11. Looking at the pole-star.
12. Journey to the husband's home.
13. Cohabitation.

ĀPASTAMBA

1. Selection of an auspicious day.
2. Negotiation.
3. Selection of the bride.
4. Weeping of the bride.
5. Ritual bath.
6. Pāṇigrahaṇa.
7. Saptapadī.
8. Walking round the fire.
9. Vivāhahoma.
10. Stepping on the stone.
11. Lājahoma. } 3 times.
12. Walking round the fire.
13. Journey of the bride to her husband's home.
14. Crossing the threshold.
15. Sitting on the red bull's hide.
16. Placing a boy in her lap.
17. Looking at the pole-star and Arundhatī.
18. Cohabitation.

KHĀDIRA

1. Kindling fire by attrition.
2. Ritual bath.
3. Clothing.
4. Ājya nd Mahāvyāhṛti sacrifices.
5. Stepping on the stone.
6. Walking round the fire.
7. Lājahoma.
8. Saptapadī.
9. Pāṇigrahaṇa.
10. Breaking the journey to a Brāhmaṇa's house.
11. Looking at the pole-star.
12. Arghya ceremony.
13. Sacrifice after three nights and washing the bride.
14. Cohabitation.

MĀNAVA

1. Selection of an auspicious day.
2. Selection of the bride.
3. Pradāna.
4. Arghya reception of the bridegroom.
5. Alaṃkarana.
6. Kindling of fire.
7. Bathing and clothing.
8. Homa.
9. Looking at each other.
10. Pāṇigrahaṇa.
11. Aśmārohana.
12. Lājahoma.
13. Saptapadī.
14. Prayāna (departure of the bride to the bridegroom's house).
15. Placing a brahmacārin in the lap of the bride.
16. Cohabitation.

HIRAṆYAKESIN

1. Selection of the bride.
2. Selection of an auspicious day.
3. Mahāvyāhṛti homa.
4. Vivāhahoma.
5. Treading on the stone
6. Pāṇigrahaṇa 3 times.
7. Walking round the fire.
8. Lājahoma.
9. Saptapadī.
10. Journey of the bride.
11. Crossing the threshold.
12. Sitting on the red bull's hide.
13. Looking at the pole-star and Arundhati.
14. Sacrifice with mess of cooked food.
15. Cohabitation.

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